Biebighauser, Jeffrey (2012) Augustine and the phenomenological tradition. PhD thesis, University of Nottingham.

AUGUSTINE AND THE PHENOMENOLOGICAL TRADITION

Jeffrey Olsen Biebighauser, MA.

Thesis submitted to the University of Nottingham

for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

May 2012

Abstract

This essay traces the reception of Augustine in the 20th and 21st century phenomenological tradition. It gives special attention to recent monographs on Augustine by Jean-Luc Marion and Jean-Louis Chrétien, but contextualises these both fore (by examining the earlier work of Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger, as well as earlier and less determinative Augustinian engagements by Marion and Chrétien) and aft (by critically considering the philosophical, philological and theological implications of phenomenology for the study of Augustine). The cross-fertilization of its study of Augustine himself and its study of the various phenomenological appropriations of Augustine sheds new light on the Augustinian questions of Platonism, ontology, and the role of Scripture in philosophy.

I wish to express appreciation to the following people and institutions:

For emotional, intellectual and financial support:

Dorothy Metzger, Paul and Jo Biebighauser, Donna and John Olsen.

For guiding the project's development fundamentally:

Prof John Milbank, Dr Karen Kilby, Dr Conor Cunningham.

For collegial encouragement and friendship:

Eric Austin Lee, Aaron Riches, Anthony Paul Smith, Stuart Jesson, Joseph Vnuk, OP, Michael O'Neill Burns, Tommy Lynch, Daniel Haynes, Andrea Russell.

For generous comments:

Prof. Scott Huelin, Donna Olsen, Caleb Crainer, Dr Simon Oliver, Prof Lewis Ayres.

For hosting my work:

The Libraries of the University of St Thomas, which were so hospitable to the work that they are not even aware that I had no official business using their computers and reading their books.

For the caffeination and hospitality without which the project truly never would have survived:

Lee Rosy's, The Malt Cross, Jam Cafe, The Angry Catfish, Fireroast Mountain Coffee, Coffee Bene, Caribou Coffee 1265, Peace Coffee.

And to my patient wife, Meghan.

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I. Introduction

"*Mentitur qui te totam legisse factetur*," Isidore of Seville famously says to an imagined Augustine: The one who confesses that he has read all of you, lies.[1] The difficulty of approaching Augustine is first a function of the sheer amount of words he wrote and said, and secondly a matter of the swath of genres in which he wrote and said them, and thirdly a matter of the variance of styles, intellectual positions, and temperaments which he adopted. Even if, in a mundane thought experiment, we can imagine a reader having brushed her eyes across all of these words, it is difficult to imagine her being able to make systematic sense of them all. We always approach Augustine in some sort of *medias res*, and our understanding of him is always provisional. We could translate Isidore more loosely: The best reader of Augustine is the one who does not deceive himself into thinking that he is reading Augustine entirely, or reading entirely Augustine. Perhaps the Reformation would have taken a much different shape if all of his 16th century adherents would acknowledge this fact. Perhaps we could make a similar case for the current ecumenical scene.

But disputes on Augustinian turf are not limited to theological and ecclesial crises. If, in listing Augustine's explicit and self-conscious descendents, theological figures come to mind first, they are nonetheless followed by similarly explicit and self-consciously Augustinian philosophers:

[1] Isidore of Seville, *De natura rerum* (Migne *PL* 83.1109).

Descartes, Malebranche, Wittgenstein… Any number of theological and philosophical figures can function as an introduction to Augustine, and more than an introduction, a lens. The present essay takes it as axiomatic that no reader approaches Augustine without such a lens, without a guide, without some sort of prioritization of intellectual concerns, without a canon of supposed greater and lesser works, without presuppositions of which questions are worth asking, which answers are worth entertaining, and in many cases which genres are worth ignoring altogether.

This thesis intends to introduce the phenomenological tradition as a lens onto the Augustinian terrain which has been emerging from continental Europe for the past century, and which has been especially prominent and coherent in the past decade. In it I will give a sense of the contours of this tradition: its intentions, its contexts, the textual ground on which it plays, its methodologies, and its limitations. I will make the case that the phenomenological readers of Augustine have all used Augustine for rhetorical ends, and more decisively for philosophical ends. I will draw attention to this interesting phenomenon in some of the earliest texts of the tradition, from Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger, and I will sustain this sort of attention into a more extended reading of Jean-Luc Marion and Jean-Louis Chrétien. With regard to these latter thinkers, I will argue that their accounts of Augustine are bound at once to a theoretical fidelity to Augustine's own thought – that is, they attempt to unpack what Augustine himself tries to communicate, independently of their own theological and

philosophical agenda – and to some extent to a theoretical fidelity to their phenomenological forebears. It will be the burden of much of this thesis to describe the specific fissures that this dual loyalty causes for their work, and to evaluate the success of their attempts to navigate such fissures. In making this assessment, I want to make my own loyalty clear: it lies with Augustine, and not with phenomenology. I will suggest throughout this work that there is significant overlap between the two, and I will make a case for why this is so. This work has already, in large part, been done for me by Marion and Chrétien themselves – Marion in particular takes many pains to elaborate a "proto-phenomenology" present in Augustine, and I find his account to point satisfactorily to several passages in Augustine which agree with, and even anticipate, certain phenomenological theses and methods. But ultimately, there are points of departure from Augustine in the dogmatic foundational texts of phenomenology – indeed, how could there not be, given the millennium-and-a-half of philosophical developments and departures between them? – and I intend to call the reader's attention to places where I have found phenomenological shibboleths intruding on Augustinian shibboleths. Even more frequently, I will argue that while a particular conclusion of Marion or Chrétien is correct, it only captures a part of the picture, and by ignoring other related conceptual or textual material, they risk oversimplifying Augustine. The principle examples of this pattern are Augustine's metaphysics, and Augustine's relationship to the Neo-Platonic tradition. Since Marion in particular fights hard against the rather uncontroversial nature of the latter, and the very existence of the former, I

am relatively forceful in my critiques of his expositions of Augustine with regard to both. I have not done so with malice, but with the sincere belief that Marion wants to learn from Augustine, and that he closes himself off from such an education due to a surprisingly over-developed sense of loyalty to dogmatic phenomenology. The same is true, to a lesser extent, for my response to Chrétien's monograph on Augustine – although Chrétien has himself outlined similar critical comments in his other works.

This is a work on Augustine, and on his philosophical reception in the 20th century and beyond. One easy way of beginning – actually a surprisingly popular one – would be to point to etymology, and say that for Augustine, philosophy is the love of wisdom, and then discuss what Augustine says about love or about wisdom. Typically this is an excuse to talk a lot, sometimes without much rigor, and it tends to wind up being dismissive of, or wringing our hands about, what goes on in philosophy departments these days, lamenting that current institutional philosophy is not just a code for sophiology, or that philosophers do not talk enough about love. Although love will certainly become a theme for this work, because it is a theme for Augustine's phenomenological interlocutors, I hope in my discussion of their work to avoid this hand-wringing. But even the wringing of hands is not entirely bereft of salutary motivation: it is not unrelated to one of the facets of Augustine that has been most attractive to moderns, namely that he wrote at least one of his major works in the first person, and therefore cast his philosophy into a very personal realm. The *Confessions* will

often mention, even on the same page, both the attractions and shortcomings of a particular philosophical school and Augustine's struggles with toothache. There is a real sense that Augustine makes philosophy a practice, practiced by actual people, and that the 'love of wisdom' as a deeply personal quest, comparable to the love of another person for example, is more accessible or more exciting than the systematic acquisition, appreciation or rejection of various philosophical doctrines. One of the most characteristic and winsome trajectories of the phenomenological tradition which will emerge in the present essay is the real attempt to capture this "lived" nature of Augustine's philosophy. But the phenomenologists – especially Heidegger – overcompensate for a real or perceived overemphasis on Augustine's historical and intellectual context. This personal dimension is not easily separable from the more historical dimension, that which deals with these doctrines or schools.

Augustine's biographer Possidius is among the first to suggest the approach that the phenomenologists have, in recent days, taken. He closes his *Vita* by telling us that, whatever benefit we might get from reading Augustine's works would be exceeding by seeing and hearing him preach, or better, by having a conversation with him.[2] This is not simply about

[2] "From his writing assuredly it is manifest that this priest, beloved and acceptable to God, lived uprightly and soberly in the faith, hope and love of the Catholic Church insofar as he was permitted to see it by the light of truth, and those who read his works on divine subjects profit thereby. But I believe that they were able to derive greater good from him who *heard and saw* him as he spoke in person in the church, and especially those who knew well his manner of life among men (*inter homines conversationem*: more literally, those who had conversation with him)."

rhetorical charisma, sensory stimulation, or the privileging of the spoken over the written word,[3] but about exchange and (especially) dialogue (in both preaching and 'intimate conversation'). Obviously this is impossible for us, since Augustine has been dead for some time now, but I should like to suggest, by way of closing this introductory chapter, that it points us to two sort of next best things: on the one hand, as Marion and Chrétien have begun to do, to give, within our internal canon, a special place of authority to the sermons and biblical commentaries and other transcripts of Augustine's actual speeches, and to a lesser extent the dialogues, at the relative expense of the more composed philosophical treatises. And on the other hand, a way forward that is absent from the phenomenologists, which is that in some prominent passages[4] Augustine suggests that certain *ritual* aspects of his philosophy (especially the sacraments) are at the heart of the question of its continuity or break with Platonism. This is the question of the liturgical mysteries, which are formally sympathetic with certain practices in Platonism, but, Augustine argues, superior in what they accomplish; part of the work in the last chapter of this essay will be to argue that these mysteries, viewed as themselves philosophical, could easily find a place in continuity with the

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Possidius, *The Life of Saint Augustine*, trans. Herbert Weiskotten. New York: Evolution Press, 2008, 31.

[3] As is obvious from the fact that he gives us *sight* and *conversation* as relevant modes.

[4] Augustine, *Contra academicos* 3.42-3; cf. also *De civitate dei* VIII. This book (and indeed the entirety of *De civitate dei*) is wrongly neglected in many discussions of Augustine's Platonism, in favour of the one famous line from *Confessions* and also the comparatively scanty treatment in *De vera religione*. To rectify this neglect is a very peripheral interest of Chapter 5 of the present essay.

descriptions of Augustine that are present in the phenomenological tradition, particularly in the last ten years.

In order both to critique and to advance these sorts of questions, a fuller account of Augustine and his relationship to the philosophies of his time requires the delicate balancing of Augustine's personal life and the historical and philosophical contexts in which he works; the final chapter of this thesis attempts to sketch some of the directions that a dialogue between the lively phenomenologists and the sober historians might take. In any event, there is a broad consensus in Anglo-American scholarship at least that, to whatever extent the *Confessions* are a 'spiritual autobiography,' they are at least as much also an appreciation and a critique of ancient philosophies, cast in narrative form, where Mani and Cicero and Plotinus become dramatic heroes. This introduction, and indeed the whole of this thesis, takes this for granted, although in its telling, it will emerge that the fact that the last two books of the *Confessions* are an extended exegesis of Genesis is also a part of that trajectory, resulting in a reading of the *Confessions* wherein the Bible is something like a philosophical text, or maybe even the philosophical text par excellence. This insight is not entirely foreign to 20th century Anglo-American readings of Augustine, but it does tend to remain implicit, and thus under-conceptualized. It will be the onus of the last chapter of this work to conceptualize it, and to locate certain elements of Augustine's readings of Scripture, particularly of Genesis, as the center of his philosophy. Such a location, and even a valorization, of Augustine's philosophy as scriptural, is at

least implicit in passages of Marion's and Chrétien's recent books on Augustine; I begin to pull on and to follow some of these strands in the two chapters of this thesis devoted to these books. It is an impulse that I find winsome and persuasive in these recent phenomenological readings of Augustine, and it is only one among many impulses which I believe to have at least some merit. But unless there is some literature devoted to this question that I have entirely missed, these readings have been almost entirely ignored by the Anglo-American guild of Augustinian scholarship. A secondary part of my intention in this thesis, then, is to make a case to this guild that the Augustines of Husserl, Heidegger, Marion and Chrétien are worth their time, even, perhaps, a necessary supplement or corrective to the work that they do. A central disclaimer applies here. Certainly some readers of Augustine – those very conservative scholars[5] who continue to ignore the burgeoning field of scholarship emphasizing the distance between Augustine and Descartes – will be more scandalized by the phenomenological Augustine than the increasingly mainstream scholars, in America, Europe, and the United Kingdom, who insist that Augustine does not present a simple interiorist philosophy.[6] The long-standing stereotype, that Augustine

[5] I think primarily of Philip Cary, who has published a trilogy of popularizing books (*Augustine's Invention of the Inner Self: The Legacy of a Christian Platonist*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, and *Inner Grace: Augustine in the Traditions of Plato and Paul*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, and *Outward Signs: The Powerlessness of External Things in Augustine's Thought*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) which have gained a certain amount of traction in American religious studies departments, although the broader world of Augustinian scholarship has ignored or refuted him.

[6] Cf. Lewis Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010; John Milbank, "Sacred Triads: Augustine and the Indo-European Soul." Modern

is an uncomplicated figure in a straightforward trajectory of interiorist philosophers from Plotinus to Descartes, all of whom reject the material world in favor of a privileged immaterial soul, has been solidly rejected by Augustinian scholarship. But this has not entirely convinced the historians of philosophy who scarcely have the time for a cursory reading of Augustine's most prominent and obviously "philosophical" texts, let alone a serious engagement with philosophical themes in his "theological" texts, or certainly his sermons and interpretations of Scripture. The recent phenomenological engagements with Augustine, both in their openness to these more historically obscure texts, and in their ideological commitment to a cross-fertilization of topics traditionally separated by disciplinary boundaries of philosophy and theology, can serve as an ally to the Anglo-American and the continental scholars of Augustine. Both camps share an understanding of Augustine as a socially situated thinker, whose philosophy emerges in service not only to God, but to a community: the phenomenologists view this community first in terms of the created universe, where the scholars will tend to prioritize the Church, but both contexts eschew an individualist or interiorist reading of Augustine. To this extent, I am claiming that serious readers of Augustine will benefit from seriously

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Theology 13 (1997): 451-474; Rowan Williams, ""Sapientia and the Trinity: Reflections on De Trinitate." In Collectanea Augustiniana, ed. Bernard Bruning, J. van Houtem and Mathijs Lamberigts, 317-332. Louvain: Leuven Press, 1990; Michael Hanby, *Augustine and Modernity*. New York: Routledge, 2003. Lest the reader note that I pull four titles from four ideologically and institutionally related readers of Augustine, I'd like to assert that the entirely separate, very sober and historically-minded, and extremely well-regarded book by Stephen Menn comes to precisely the same conclusions as most of the above thinkers: see his *Descartes and Augustine*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

reading the phenomenological treatments of Augustine; they might not find any paradigm-shifting insights in this thesis, but they will certainly find small bits of creative and persuasive philology herein, and perhaps some paths to surprising allies.

Are Marion and Chrétien essential to this non-interiorist project? Is there something in their methodology or their concern that entirely escapes this project? Or are they merely interesting, provocative, and at best able to overlap with the best Anglo-American readings? There is, from my perspective, no question that Marion and Chrétien have some good insights into Augustine. But to what extent are these insights essentially phenomenological, and to what extent only accidentally so, or at least only indirectly bound to the practical and methodological constrictions of phenomenology? Put even more bluntly, is phenomenology itself of any value in the reading of Augustine?

The answer of my argument is 'no,' or at least only 'yes, with significant reservations.' It will be my argument that, from Heidegger on, phenomenology has a side-effect of hermeneutical carefulness, an inauguration of hermeneutics as at once a serious and an imaginative, even playful, enterprise, and that it is this care, rather than any dogmatic assertions about metaphysics, for example, that marks phenomenological readings of Augustine both as distinctively phenomenological, and as worthy of consideration within non-phenomenological circles. So the first substantial chapter, in arguing that Husserl and Heidegger have never been given

sufficient credit for their restoration of temporality to a central place in their readings of Augustine, will not hesitate to distance itself from a more rigidly doctrinaire reading of these figures as philosophically interesting in their own right. This will no doubt be unpopular among phenomenologists, and to them I offer an apology. Likewise, my reading of Marion on Augustine will often suggest that an overly pre-determined allergy to 'onto-theology' can at times derail his otherwise solid interpretation of Augustine, and further, that this allergy is almost entirely accidental to what Marion really would like to say about Augustine's thought of the self. I hesitate to quantify, but if I were forced to, I would estimate that fully 95% of Marion's project does not depend at all on his allegedly determinative decision to substitute 'phenomenology' for 'metaphysics' as the prism through which we read Augustine, and that the remaining 5% (for which Marion will no doubt be most sharply criticized from Anglo-American quarters) is indeed hard to find exegetical support for in Augustine's writings themselves. This is why I give Chrétien the more valorized place in my considerations, notwithstanding his placement in the "tradition," for Chrétien is not nearly so bound to the Heideggerean project of denying some sort of speculative or metaphysical dimension to Augustine's thought, and so his equally insightful hermeneutical approach to Augustine is not nearly so often derailed by a prior methodological (even ideological) commitment. The final chapter of this essay is in keeping with this trajectory, which allows phenomenology an important instrumental role in the interpretation of Augustine, but denies it the power to set an ideological agenda for Augustine before he is even, so to

say, allowed to speak. It will, as I have already intimated, tend more to the speculative and less to the hermeneutical, and will gesture towards directions in Augustinian scholarship which are congenial, I should think, both to the Anglo-American 'non-interiorizing' tradition of reading Augustine and to the phenomenological camp, but which neither of them have conceptualized sufficiently.

In other words, my argument is more centrally directed at the phenomenologists themselves. I will argue that the general contour of their approach to Augustine is impressively monomaniacal: the entire tradition insists on reading Augustine primarily through the prism of the relationship between the self and the world, and reading subjects and objects as co-constitutive poles of manifestation. The sheer quantity of Augustinian text that they are able to shoehorn into this framework, and with a generally persuasive output, proves that their approach is intriguing and underdeveloped. But the degree to which they have had to shift phenomenological dogma in the direction of Augustinian exploration proves that more work is still to be done. Phenomenology can bring, indeed has brought, some significant if accidental light to Augustine's life and text; but in the end, this thesis suggests that more surprisingly and more centrally, Augustine is currently in the process of converting and transfiguring phenomenology itself.

II. Husserl and Heidegger on Augustine

Abstract

In this chapter, I examine two competing early phenomenological readings of Augustine. I argue that the primary point of contention between Husserl and Heidegger on exegetical grounds functions as an emblem of the larger division between the two thinkers' phenomenological systems: Husserl's reading of Augustine and the *interior homo* maintains a fundamentally subject-oriented phenomenology under the guise of the *epoché*, whilst Heidegger's more sustained reading of *Confessions* X elaborates a symbiotic relationship between subject and object. But the similarities between their accounts are ultimately more important for the current project. Both thinkers rightly establish temporality as a determinative question for how one reads Augustine, and for how one practices phenomenology; both arbitrarily exclude theology and Greek metaphysics from their considerations, in an attempt to preserve a supposedly pure arena for phenomena to assert themselves. In the end, since Heidegger has been more decisive in the tradition of phenomenological encounters with Augustine, and since his reading of Augustine is more superficially coherent, I begin here to argue for the necessity of a more rigorous engagement with Augustine's theological metaphysics.

Husserl makes prominent but elliptical use of Augustine

First, a disclaimer: this section of this chapter might be frustrating for some readers. Unlike the section on Heidegger which follows it, and unlike the subsequent chapters on Marion and on Chrétien, I have here a scarcity of material. So far as I have been able to determine, Augustine appears with some significance only twice in the Husserlian canon: very famously as the closing quotation of the *Cartesian Meditations*, and less famously as the introductory quotation of *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness*. Some words of self-justification are thus in order, if only to clarify the use I make of Husserl and his importance to this project. In part this use and this importance are limited to methodological foils; only in the dim light of Husserl's off-hand (if not to say sloppy) references to Augustine can the brilliance of the latter thinkers and their close attention to what Augustine says and how he says it shine. But lest it seem disingenuous or radically uncharitable to castigate Husserl for not providing me with an extended reading of a fourth-century bishop – how could he have known that the tradition he inaugurated in the face of his cultural and academic climate precisely to cast off tradition and concern for figures in the history of philosophy would have then fought so rigorously to claim certain historical figures as their own? – I have seen it preferable to assume the most about Husserl's uses of Augustine. More precisely I have in mind the following hermeneutic rule: if Husserl restricts himself to only a few citations of only a

few historical figures, we ought to read those citations as particularly important to Husserl, and to read them in their context as though they are intended to disclose something essential of the early phenomenological project. That my quasi-chronological approach has placed these relatively scant passages at the outset of my project puts the whole of the project, as any rhetorician knows, at risk; therefore I ask the reader for some measure of charity. If it seems to a particular reader that I make Husserl to say more than he says, or worse, that I am guilty of making Husserl's limited engagement with Augustine a straw-man through whom the entire phenomenological tradition can be attacked, let me say first that such is far from my intent, and second that such a reader will likely be happier skipping ahead to the less putative dealings with Heidegger, Marion and Chrétien. All disclaimers aside: the relatively scarce Husserlian references to Augustine show, if not a decisive preoccupation with Augustine or Augustinianism, at the least an acknowledgement of an overlap in concerns between Augustine's early attempts to outline and defend a certain conception of subjectivity within a broader determining context of temporality. Further, as the following exegetical account will suggest, the fact that these references are made specifically to Augustine, while Husserl could have accomplished a similar task with reference instead to Plato or to Plotinus, indicates a degree of openness to a dialogue with theology, or even a qualified concession that phenomenology is in some part theological in its very constitution.

Of the two references to Augustine in the Husserlian canon which are significant to the present project, one is more famous than the other: the closing line of the Cartesian Meditations. Although the other reference (the opening of *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness*) is more directly relevant to this thesis, more substantial, and more predictive of the use of Augustine which his heirs will make, I here begin with the more famous quotation, if for no other reason than that Husserl himself seems to have viewed this as more important – he has, after all, quoted it (which is itself significant), in Latin (this may only be a pretension, but Husserl is not prone to epigraphs, so the style might betray something of the substance's importance to him), and has done so at the end of a series of lectures intended as 'An Introduction to Phenomenology.'[7]

The *epoché* is a revision of an Augustinian, not a Cartesian, concept

To begin, then, at the end: the closing lines of these lectures.

> "The Delphic motto, 'Know thyself!' has gained a new signification … I must lose the world by epoché, in order to regain it by a universal self-examination. "*Noli foras ire,*" says Augustine, "*in te redi, in interiore homine habitat veritas.*"[8]

Somewhat frustratingly, Husserl gives no explanation of what is 'new' in his reformulation of the Delphic oracle's exhortation into Augustinian terminology. He merely quotes Augustine and gnomically leaves it to his

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[7] Edmund Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology*. Trans. Dorion Cairns. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1950.

[8] Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations,* 157 (citing *De vera religione* 39.72).

readers to understand or to interpret the significance of this signification. To unravel this mystery, we may follow two avenues. First, the decision to refer to Augustine, rather than Descartes, suggests something linguistically unique about the Augustinian quotation: surely Husserl would not struggle to find a Cartesian formulation of the Delphic motto. This leads us to the second avenue: the departure from Delphi is not found in the first part of the quotation ("do not wish to go outside, go inside yourself"), but in the second part ("truth makes its home in the interior person"). In other words, to assert that truth can be found, or that it *exists*, in the interior, is not in the least a unique occurrence to Augustine; what is peculiarly Augustinian is the claim that truth *lives*, makes a habitat, there. The introduction of truth as something that lives, is active, and actively dwells in people: one need not (and indeed Husserl certainly does not) read this as fully Christian – since *veritas* is for Augustine incarnate, and so obviously has to find a home somewhere – to find in it a somewhat bolder claim than the Delphic, Platonic or Cartesian insistence that truth is stably located in the self.

In the context of the whole of the Cartesian Meditations, which is structured as a "radical" formal appropriation of Descartes which obliges Husserl "to reject nearly all the well-known doctrinal content of the Cartesian philosophy,"[9] this closing quotation leaps off the page. Since Husserl has announced that his phenomenology retains the formal Cartesian configuration of rejecting the "being of the world" as mediated through the senses and through experience, in order to gain it back through the

[9] Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations,* 1.

cogitations of the self, we must take special care to note that Husserl does not naively repeat what he perceives as the Cartesian error: namely, to replace a brutely immanent objectivism with an equally immanent subjectivism.[10] Herein lies the difference between a Cartesian *dubito* and a phenomenological epoché, and the heart of what Husserl means to elaborate in place of Descartes' self-guaranteeing self. He describes it as "transcendental subjectivism," which does not simply reverse the hierarchy of pre-Cartesian experientialism and so preserve its terms (with the subject determining objects, rather than objects determining the subject), but instead inscribes the subject and the object each with a certain power to delimit, influence and even constitute the other one. This is at least Husserl's theoretical commitment, although as we shall see he struggles to maintain its integrity when he practices the epoché, at least in *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness*.

Some support for my reading of *habitat* as the decisive word in Husserl's quotation of *De vera religione* can be found in these opening remarks of the *Meditations*. Husserl draws attention, in his introductory exposition of Descartes, to the activity of the ego:

> Anything belonging to the world, any spatio-temporal being, exists for me -- that is to say, is accepted by me -- in that I experience it, perceive it, remember it, think of it somehow, judge about it, value it, desire it, or the like. Descartes, as we know, indicated all that by the name *cogito*.[11]

[10] Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations,* 4.
[11] Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations,* 20-1.

The epoché which brings to light all of these activities is highly attuned to *cogito* as a verb. When the self thinks (in the richness of the term which Husserl, rightly or not, ascribes to Descartes) the world, both the self and the world flow through the *res cogitans*, and one relies on the other. No world without the self: this much Descartes shows. But the genius in his formulation, according to Husserl, which remains hidden even to himself, is that there is also no self without world; both are expressed in "the grammatical sense of the sentence, *ego cogito* … [which] expresses the ego's living present." Husserl's grammatically trained ear cannot help but notice that Descartes could easily have chosen to express his most famous formulation in the perfect tense, but he did not: much like Augustine's *veritas*, if it exists at all, it exists as living in time, and more specifically in the present time. *Interior homo* is less emphasized than *habitat*, and *ego* less than *cogito*: the truth that lives in the inner man is one that is verb-al, alive, unpredictable, and only partially and mediately grasped by the also verb-al, alive and unpredictable *ego cogito*. This includes all modes of human thought: perception of the present is of course the paradigmatic example, but recollection and imagination also exist only in this unpredictable and mediated way. The phenomenological structuring of the self is emphatically not limited to actuality, even if it is always performed in the present tense.[12] Quite the contrary: even in the present, the phenomenological self is primarily constituted by an entirely formal intuition of all of its possibilities, empty of all actual content. Moreover, since all particular forms of the world

[12] Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations,* 28-9.

– those constituted in the past, the present and the future – are constituted "in a certain noetic-noematic formal structure of *flowing modes* of givenness," Husserl feels emboldened to label this flowing of moments as the "universal form of all … egological genesis."[13] Or again, in a passage which approximates or anticipates the Heideggerean Dasein:

> Only by virtue of this new attitude do I see that all the world, and therefore whatever exists naturally, exists for me only as accepted by me, with the sense that it has for me at the time -- that it exists for me only as *cogitatum* of my changing and, while changing, interconnected *cogitations* … The *fundamental form* of this universal synthesis, the form that makes all other syntheses of consciousness possible, is the all-embracing *consciousness of internal time*.[14]

Phenomenology purports its concept of "time" to be Augustinian

Since Descartes does not wrestle with time as a philosophical problem, and Augustine famously does, it will not surprise us to find that it is a quotation from Augustine which opens Husserl's work on the same subject. He begins *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness*[15] thus:

> The analysis of time consciousness is an age-old crux of descriptive psychology and theory of knowledge. The first thinker to be deeply sensitive to the immense difficulties to be found here was Augustine, who labored almost to despair over this problem. Chapters 13-18 of Book XI of the *Confessions* must even today be thoroughly studied by everyone concerned with the problem of time (…) One may still say with Augustine: *si nemo a me quaerat, scio, si quaerenti explicare velim, nescio.*[16]

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[13] Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations,* 28-9.
[14] Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations,* 37.
[15] Edmund Husserl, *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness,* trans. James Churchill. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1964.
[16] Husserl, *Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness,* 37.

One is left to assume, at least on a cursory reading, that this quotation is the only portion of the *Confessions* which is relevant to his enquiry; he never presents, but merely supposes, such a "thorough study" of *Conf.* XI. Husserl sets up this problematic *nescio* as

> the attempt to account for time-consciousness, to put Objective time and subjective time-consciousness into the right relations and thus gain an understanding of how temporal Objectivity -- therefore, individual Objectivity in general -- can be constituted in subjective time-consciousness -- indeed, as soon as we even make the attempt to undertake an analysis of pure subjective time-consciousness -- the phenomenological content of lived experiences of time -- we are involved in the most extraordinary difficulties, contradictions and entanglements.[17]

This excludes "Objective time" as an improper datum for phenomenology: to consider this would be "world-time, real time, the time of nature in the sense of natural science including psychology…".[18] Instead his lectures exposit "the temporal character of objects of perception, memory and anticipation."[19] While the language here is obviously Augustinian in its provenance, no further reference is made to Augustine.

In explicitly authorizing use of *Conf.* XI.13-18, Husserl raises several questions. The first is whether these six chapters, as he leads us to believe, present a discrete contemplation and explication of the Augustinian meditation on time-consciousness, quite apart from the larger question of whether it is legitimate to consider them outside of or apart from the whole

[17] Husserl, *Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness,* 21-2.
[18] Husserl, *Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness,* 23.
[19] Husserl, *Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness,* 23.

of the *Confessions*, let alone the rest of the Augustinian corpus. A cursory reading, content to rest with the only explicit citation Husserl gives (*si nemo a me quaeret*…, XI.15.18) might conclude that the influence here is only superficial and banal -- the pithy and even catchy formulation of the paradox which is applicable across the board to any facet of the schema of the transcendental epoché interrupting the natural attitude.[20] In keeping with my commitment to assume the most, however, I here feel justified in taking a small detour to rehearse the most salient aspects of the chapters Husserl refers to, familiar as these are likely to be to many readers; we cannot rest content at Husserl's perhaps hyperbolic praise of Augustine as "this great thinker" who, in "struggling so earnestly," has "made more masterful [and] significant progress in these matters" than anyone "in this knowledge-proud modern generation."[21] This tactic of referring readers to Augustine and praising him obscures the precise way in which Husserl uses Augustine, and allows one to forget other potential (and potentially more fruitful) purposes in service to which one could employ him, and so a brief recapitulation of *Confessions* XI is in order.

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[20] Indeed there is no shortage of phenomenologists who, in treating time or other subjects, make just such a use of this quotation: cf. e.g.. Adolf Reinach, "Concerning Phenomenology," trans. Dallas Willard, *The* Personalist 50 (1969), p. 195. Wittgenstein has perhaps the most famous such citation of this phrase. See Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G.E.M. Anscombe. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1963. § 89.

[21] Husserl, *Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness,* 21.

Time for Augustine is inseparable from a theology of creation

Augustine's analysis of time emerges out of the problem -- quickly shown to be a false problem -- of God's seeming inactivity 'before' God created the heaven and the earth. He notes that the question raised by this problem are due at once to a failure of the imagination and to a lack of pious rigor: on the one hand, they assume that God's creativity presupposes and follows the logic of time, rather than authorizing and governing it, and on the other hand they fall short of understanding time as fully equatable with heaven and earth themselves, and thus still subordinate to God. In phenomenological terms, we could thus label time as the transcendental a priori of all created phenomena, which yet requires these phenomena in order to exist.[22] The implication is that eternity, rather than being foreign to time -- even to the present time -- is more fully and more truly said to be 'present' than the present time (and thus the 'presence' of any particular time). For this reason God is said to be "in the sublimity of an eternity which is always in the present". This leads to an aporetic formulation of being and time: "the years which are ours will not all be until all years have ceased to be";[23] time only exists in and by means of ceasing to exist. Augustine radicalizes this aporia: "If then, in order to be time at all, the present is so made [*fit*: 'so becomes'] in such a way that it passes into the past, how can we say that this present also 'is'? The cause of its being is that it will

[22] Augustine, *Conf.* XI.13.15.
[23] Augustine, *Conf.* XI.13.16.

cease to be."[24] The customary translation of *fieri* here as 'is made' is not inaccurate, particularly given the context of a discussion of creation and Genesis, but it does risk obscuring the ontological principle here, that all becoming begins in an inability or a refusal fully to be. It is important to note here (against a certain Heideggerean impulse) that this aporia is not at all contingent on a theology of the fall, but is the logic of creation itself. This fundamental aporia distracts Augustine into outlining others: for example, although we commonly speak of time as *being* long or short in duration, it is strictly impossible to predicate such length to any time except the present, since it can only *be* long or short if it *is* as we speak of it, like a tree can only *be* tall, or short, or alive, if it *is* -- but on the other hand, time can only be experienced as being in the present moment, as being present-ed in the *nunc*, which is always slipping away as soon as it is named. Though Augustine clearly has read his Plotinus on the matter[25] his argument does not rely on philosophical authority but solely on the methodology of reflecting on quotidian experience. There is then a radical sense in which the oft-quoted *si nemo a me quaeret* is true: the very act of asking, in the present tense, what time is (or even what time it is) renders a correct answer impossible, in the first case because time strictly speaking *is not*, but only *becomes*, and in the second because by the time I have checked my watch and formulated the words "It is 3:30," that time has elapsed, disappeared, and ceased to be. The

[24] Augustine, *Conf.* XI.14.17.

[25] Cf. A.H. Armstrong, ed. *Plotinus: Enneads* (with English translation). Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966-1988. 3.7.

world itself is composed of "fugitive moments."[26] And nevertheless we do know what time is, or rather becomes: life is not utterly crippled by our inability to grasp it, formulate it or fix it in a pretended frozen (which is to say timeless) schema.[27] Augustine's point in elaborating these aporias is neither speculation for its own sake, nor a sort of mocking scepticism in service of the discouragement of philosophical hubris, but a serious quest to demonstrate all time as contingent existence, and thus all speculation (here functioning as a paradigm of any enterprise within time) as partial, in the final analysis neither authoritative nor meaningless. For this reason all thought, all speech and all act falls into the same category as memory or prophecy (the two examples by which Augustine is most perplexed): they all exist for us only in "images"[28] which need not be illusory, but by the same token are by definition never exhaustive.[29] Memory, anticipation and perception -- three fundamental modes of time-consciousness -- are thus all modes of mediate "discerning (*cernuntur*) as present."[30] Augustine's final example -- that of the rising of the sun -- possesses a certain double appropriateness. In the first place, in the most banal sense, the prediction of a full sunrise based on the first breaking of the dawn illustrates our dependence on presented facts to foretell future realities, and the future as a horizon for interpreting the present, and in the second, more radically, the mediate relationship of light to anything we see presents time as the metaphorical horizon in which the rest

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[26] Augustine, *Conf.* XI.15.20.
[27] Augustine, *Conf.* XI.16.21
[28] Augustine, *Conf.* XI.18.23.
[29] Cf. Ch. 5 of the present study.
[30] Augustine, *Conf.* XI.18.24.

of creation appears for us. Time is thus the first 'thing' created, and our internal consciousness of time grounds our consciousness of all things.

Before considering the extent to which Husserl makes use of Augustine's considerations, let us pause and consider certain questions raised by his methodology. From the standpoint of Augustinian scholarship, it is objectionable that Husserl excludes the immediate context of *Conf.* X-XI, including the lengthy discussion of *memoria*, or the aporias of creation and eternity. From a less theologically motivated perspective, even the most sympathetic phenomenological interpreter of Husserl would struggle to articulate his reasons for excluding the discussion of *being* from the backdrop of this book. On both fronts, it is tempting to suggest that Husserl has not read as closely as he recommends, nor as broadly as he ought.

Augustine's *epoché* is more radical than Husserl's in two ways: one, because it includes the self; two, because it is ontological

The presentation of *Conf.* XI.13-18 as the playing grounds for his analysis has excluded too much; nevertheless, it is not surprising that these chapters provide some fertile ground for his phenomenology to till. The Augustinian limitation of time to the mediate and contingent, but no less determining, horizon of phenomenology in the strict sense also motivates Husserl's analysis: one can speculate regarding, or even assume, a totalizing "Objective" time, corresponding to the eternal present of Augustine's theological argument. Indeed, such an assumption is nearly impossible to

escape in daily working within the natural attitude, but "one cannot discover the least trace" of such an objective time "through phenomenological analysis."[31] The aporia of the "origin of time," answered for Augustine only in certain spiritual exercises, remains for Husserl an epistemological riddle, since for Husserl (as not for Augustine) the mediate nature of time restricts its disclosive power to the purely formal realm.

The opening gambit of *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness* mirrors Augustine's in form: beginning with the destabilizing insights that the sensing or thinking subject depends entirely on the horizon of the present time to sense or to think,[32] Husserl raises the "question of the origin of time."[33] He even goes as far as to borrow – although he attributes the example and the insight to Brentano, in an unpublished lecture – Augustine's famous description of a melody, in this case Ambrose's evening hymn, which occurs in *Conf.* XI.27.35, a portion which falls considerably outside the chapters which Husserl has referred to and authorized as relevant. Husserl tellingly takes from the example of a song only one of Augustine's two central lessons: he acknowledges that the flux of time and of forgetting is so powerful that, without the power of memory intervening, we could not make sense of a sequence of tones, that is, some portion of subjective consciousness is required for the very constitution of a melody.[34] But he

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[31] Husserl, *Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness*, 24.
[32] Augustine, *Conf.* XI.11.13; cf. Husserl, *Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness,* 21-6.
[33] Augustine, *Conf.* XI.12.14-13.15; cf. Husserl, *Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness,* 27-9.
[34] Cf. Augustine, *Conf.* XI.27.35

misses or ignores a corollary doctrine which limits this first insight, namely that this melody does not leave the memory which helps to constitute its very existence intact; by ignoring this reciprocality, as though either the self which sings a hymn or the self that hears it and reassembles it were a neutral and omnipotent instrument of some higher, undefined power, Husserl loses almost entirely the import of this Augustinian insight. If, as Marion has seen,[35] Augustine's famous definition of time as a *distentio animi* should be understood grammatically as comprising both a subjective and an objective genitive, Husserl has grasped only one half of the description, a fact which corrupts his understanding even of this half: he sees how the mind, through the consciousness of time, stretches (or 'intends') the thing it perceives, but fails to see how this intention also stretches the mind, as Augustine will put it, or, to cast the same concept into more familiarly phenomenological terminology, calls the self itself into question. This omission on Husserl's part – which, on an exegetical level, goes unnoted and thus un-argued for – is illustrative of the entire argument of the *Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness*. Even in this late stage of his career, when Husserl is increasingly giving privileged place to an account of time and of temporality within his transcendental reductions,[36] his dedication to plunging all phenomena under the light of temporality apparently stops just short of plunging the self into this light. In terms of the logic and the limits of phenomenology, it is worthwhile to note that this shortcoming has been seen

[35] Marion, *Au Lieu De Soi* pp. 289-295, and cf. Chapter 3 below

[36] This paves the way for much of Heidegger's early and most influential work, and this is no doubt one reason that Heidegger edited these lectures to begin with.

by Derrida[37] and more radically by Marion.[38] I want at this juncture only to make a methodological note: whether or not this unwillingness to consider the self as a radically temporal phenomenon corrupts Husserlian phenomenology, it is diagnosable as a failure to keep reading the *Confessions*. This is true even in the more sensitive and more careful treatment Husserl gives to melody as an essential image of how memory functions somewhat later in *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness*:[39] although by this consideration Husserl introduces important nuances to his description of memory, such as the possibility of a memory 'generating itself' transcendentally, still there is no sense in which the melody, in its role as an example of memory as the essentially temporalizing structure of reality, can also constitute, alter, call into question or have any reciprocal relation whatsoever with the conscious subject, who is still able to wield memory as an instrument. The subject-object relation is still – against Husserl's own commitments, elaborated in *Cartesian Meditations* and elsewhere – trapped on a fundamentally and irreversibly one-way street. No matter how much Husserl will use the language of objects 'impressing' themselves on the subject's consciousness, the entire logical structure he constructs, elaborates and defends exists to maintain the subject as the powerful entity in the subject-object relation: the subject retains the active role, and the object (and perhaps even time itself) is defined first by its passivity.

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[37] Jacques Derrida, *The Problem of Genesis in Husserl's Philosophy*, trans. Marian Hobson. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2003.
[38] Jean-Luc Marion, *Being Given: Toward a Phenomenology of Givenness*, trans. Jeffrey L. Kosky. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002, 27-33.
[39] Husserl, *Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness*, 57ff.

Husserl seems to be aware of at least one weakness within this structure. The sensation of this weakness is precisely what motivates Augustine to be so emphatic within the confines of his philosophical thought that the self is not an entirely active entity – to wit, the subject's incapacity to grasp the present moment directly.[40] Husserl betrays his awareness of this weakness by locating the apex of the subject's active power not only to grasp but to call forth and indeed to create a moment exclusively in the past,[41] for only in my intuition of the past can my act of intuiting and that which I intuit entirely overlap. Both Husserl and Augustine are aware that the subject can only present to itself that which is already past, and this is why memory plays such an important role in their portraits not only of time, but of the self. But Augustine – perhaps at least partially because he writes in the first person, and also because he writes in narrative form – is aware, as Husserl shows no awareness, that memory, narration, re-narration and indeed consciousness itself can only constitute an object by elaborating it, refracting it, even distorting it. Every point raised by theorists of hermeneutics, for example about the reader constituting a textual meaning but also in part being constituted, qua reader, by the event of that same textual meaning, applies in an Augustinian perspective also or even primarily in an ontological key: since we live in a world that was created verbally, all existence follows this same form of co-constitutive or reciprocal textual events. How then could Husserl's attempts to recast this insight into a solely epistemological key fail

[40] Augustine, *Conf.* XI.31.41.
[41] Husserl, *Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness,* 63-4.

to appear as a rather weak shadow of Augustine's powerful and disorienting insistence that a transcendent power of memory is not only the present's mode of relating to the past, but also the only way that the self can relate even to the present in the moment as it is presented (albeit in an infinitely oblique way, since it must somehow accomplish the impossible traversal of the *nunc* by the eternal)? Further, in this shadow, can it be a surprise that Husserl is unable to discern any difference between the structure of intending something wholly imaginary and that of intending an 'enduring being' which has always been and will always be?[42] And yet the problem with this equivalence is not at all, from an Augustinian perspective (as it might be from, say, a Thomist perspective) that the difference between possible and actual has been erased. The problem is rather that this erasure has been performed insufficiently, that is, only epistemologically, and not ontologically: the mind or self which exercises perception by means of memory floats above this temporalizing mechanism, as somehow, without explanation or phenomenological justification, existing stably as an entity independent of the time via which it intends the world. The crucial difference here marks out a trap which Heidegger and his most literal followers go perhaps too far to avoid. While both Husserl and Augustine posit some stable entity, both 'ever ancient and ever new'[43] as necessary to ground both tradition and novelty, and thus to make sense even of the present moment, Augustine very intentionally avoids making, as Husserl

[42] Husserl, *Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness,* 84-5.
[43] Augustine, *Conf.* X.27.38.

rather naively makes, this structure so easily accessible to himself, or indeed equivalent with the self. Such, for him, would not only be a moral failure, but a gravely intellectual nonsense. That is to say, a critique of this self-sufficiently stable structure of consciousness – of time or of anything which emerges against time's horizon – need not be an excessively pious cry of hubris, nor even necessarily theological in form, but can take place on exclusively phenomenological grounds. Had Husserl not quoted Augustine at the beginning of the work, he might have more persuasively hidden his commitment to the freedom of the determining subject; by opening with Augustine, he quietly draws attention to the perdurant idealism of his transcendental subjectivity, albeit an idealism which is sharply limited to the formal structures of the intuiting self. In the last analysis, Husserl's phenomenology aims not merely to describe temporality and finitude, but to conquer it; this indicates at least some of the phenomenological catalyst for Heidegger's subsequent reading of *Confessions* X.

As I noted at the beginning of this chapter, Husserl's references to Augustine are both few and casual; only the completist of the phenomenological tradition (which I neither pretend nor aspire to be) could benefit by much more engagement than I have here offered. The major reason, however, for dealing with Husserl at all in this 'botched genealogy,' where only a very weak sense of tradition binds a later thinker to an earlier one, is to set up a foil to the Heideggerean strand of reading Augustine. In other words, the foregoing analysis aims only to show the phenomenological

reading of Augustine that never was – for even the hints that Husserl provides point toward an Augustine who will recognizable neither to the Augustinian guild nor to the tradition which Heidegger will inaugurate. For the remainder of this chapter, then, I shall consider two Heideggerean texts; the first, the translated notes of a lecture course which Heidegger gave on a book of the *Confessions*, and the second, albeit in a more speculative key, the much more decisive *Being and Time*.

Heidegger attempts to remediate Husserl's deficiencies

Had the present essay been written even ten years ago, it would be at the severe disadvantage of lacking an English translation of Heidegger's lecture notes from his 1920-1 seminar on "The Phenomenology of the Religious Life."[44] Had it been written twenty years ago, it would lack even access to the German text of these notes. Were this the case, my account would have to have been at once more speculative, in that I would have had to triangulate an account of Heidegger's Augustinianism from a few references in *Being and Time* and elsewhere, and more contentiously argumentative, in that I would have had to demonstrate a more subterranean Augustinianism from Heidegger's own development of an ontological phenomenology, roughly akin to Augustine's own, or from certain historical facts (such as the fact that Heidegger encouraged his closest disciples to read

[44] Martin Heidegger, "Augustine and Neo-Platonism" in *The Phenomenology of Religious Life*, trans. Matthias Fritsch and Jennifer Anna Gosetti-Ferencci. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2004.

Augustine carefully).[45] In this regard, the state of scholarship on Heidegger with regard to Augustine would have looked much like the current state of scholarship on Husserl: that is, nearly non-existent, and justifiably so. As it stands, the publication and subsequent translation of these lecture notes has received considerable attention from both scholars of Heidegger and thinkers attuned to the religious background of phenomenological thought more generally.[46] Indeed the amount of recent interest in these lecture notes (and other assorted related interest) may hint toward an emerging verdict on the charges of Janicaud, issued not so long ago:[47] that not only is the 'theological turn' in French phenomenology not necessarily as methodologically problematic as Janicaud alleged, but that it is not even really a 'turn' so much as a return. In any event, much of the debate and discussion surrounding these lecture notes have tried to determine their role in the Heideggerean canon, attempting especially to demonstrate or disprove that certain doctrines of *Being and Time* emerged earlier, or perhaps even first of all, in an engagement with Augustine -- whether, for example, *Sorge* is a mere translation of the Augustinian *cura*, or whether the "will-not-to-will" finds

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45 The most famous of these is Hannah Arendt, whose dissertation has been published in English as *Love and Saint Augustine*, trans. Joanna Vecchiarelli Scott and Judith Stark. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998.

46 An important, if eclectic, collection of essays on this subject was published in 2006: Craig J.N. de Paulo, ed. *The Influence of Augustine on Heidegger: The Emergence of an Augustinian Phenomenology*. Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2006. I should also give some mention of Sean McGrath's important work on the early Heidegger, although the importance of Augustine in these pages is somewhat overshadowed by McGrath's attention to Bonaventure, Aquinas, Scotus and even Luther: see his *The Early Heidegger and Medieval Philosophy: Phenomenology for the Godforsaken*. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2006.

47 Dominique Janicaud, ed. *Phenomenology and the "Theological Turn": The French Debate*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2000.

some kind of ultimate historical rooting in the distinction between *uti* and *frui*. I leave much of this important work to one side, since my concern in this chapter is not the shape of Heidegger's thought generally (a black hole of a task from which many scholars find themselves happily unable to escape), but the more modest attempt to find in these notes an alternate Augustinianism within the phenomenological tradition, another, in some ways opposing, instinct which shapes the dialectic through which Marion and Chrétien will navigate their own readings of Augustine. I will deal with *Being and Time*, then, only to the limited extent to which it sheds light on the insights and shortcomings of Marion and Chrétien.

To that opening disclaimer I will add two other observations, both of which demarcate ways in which Heidegger's use of Augustine differs from that of Husserl, and set the stage for especially my consideration of Marion (and of Chrétien, albeit to a lesser extent). First and most obviously, the attention and sensitivity to detail which emerges in Heidegger's lectures will be apparent in my exposition of them. This should be no surprise, since Heidegger is nothing if not a good "close reader" of texts, and his role in the formation of the discipline of hermeneutics in the 20th century is not irrelevant to his method, even when he is not discussing hermeneutics explicitly. To refer his auditors to a passage, as does Husserl, without interpreting that passage with care, would be foreign to Heidegger, and would cost him the opportunity to make his points by making inventive and sometimes wild glosses on the Latin text. Heidegger works, as it were, within

the margins of the *Confessions*, and his account of phenomenology in Augustine is shaped less like a system and more like marginalia. The second consideration, probably more determinative, is the choice of pages on which he scrawls these marginalia. Heidegger's career-long focus on time might prepare us to expect his lectures on Augustine to center, like Husserl's, on *Conf.* XI; instead they take as their subject the more elusive *Conf.* X, Augustine's confession of what he is in the *nunc*, the present moment (that is, as he writes). In the introduction to the lecture, Heidegger suggests certain reasons for this choice, which I will examine momentarily. For now, I simply want to point out that the foundations of the phenomenological tradition of reading Augustine care little for the first nine "autobiographical" books of the Confessions, and still less for the last two books. This tradition, then, is set in motion in a rather simple tension between the Augustine of *Conf.* X and the Augustine of *Conf.* XI, a tension which Marion and Chrétien will subtly acknowledge and also try to complicate, if not escape.

Heidegger tries to consider Augustine on Augustine's own terms, under the aegis of "factical life"

Heidegger begins his lecture by noting what his approach will not do, although this negative demarcation of the interpretation is itself limited to a few representations of Augustinian philosophical scholarship in the decades immediately preceding his course. Specifically he briefly considers and criticizes the work of Ernst Troeltsch, Adolf von Harnack and Wilhelm

Dilthey.[48] It is worth noting immediately what the introduction could well have considered, given Heidegger's concerns, but does not: Heidegger does not display any overt interest in the relationship of Augustine to Descartes, Pascal or Luther, who among other figures in the history of Augustinianism could have set up, either by way of appropriation (in the case of Luther) or contrast (Descartes or Pascal), Heidegger's own reading. Even more surprisingly absent from his attempt to show some proto-phenomenological concerns in Augustine is Husserl himself. With this omission, Heidegger neglects to give explicit shape to the question of how his reading of Augustine situates him in the phenomenological tradition; perhaps in these early stages he wished more simply to view himself as the founder of phenomenological interest in Augustine. For Heidegger, the three readings of Augustine which best serve as a counter-reading to his own are alike in their concern with evaluating Augustine as a particular instance of some general historical problem -- in the case of Troeltsch, the question is how (Christian) religion arises from and relates to (pagan) culture; in the case of Harnack, it is the translation of metaphysical dogma into personal piety; in the case of Dilthey, the emergence of internal consciousness and internal experience as an absolute metaphysical reality. In all three of these "object-historical" approaches to Augustine -- summarized as "the history of culture" (the transition from antique to medieval culture), "the history of dogma" (the transition from abstract teachings to concrete personal ethics), and "the history of science" (the transition from an ancient tension between Platonic

[48] Heidegger, "Augustine and Neo-Platonism," 120-3.

transcendence and skeptical refusal thereof to an internal, proto-Cartesian subjective transcendentalism), Augustine functions as a hinge, a transitional figure who achieved or at least attempted a seismic and objectively measurable shift in some historical narrative; for Heidegger's purposes it hardly matters which narrative is chosen. Readers familiar with the more famous lecture course on "The Introduction to the Phenomenology of Religion" (or indeed with the shape of Heidegger's approach to Aristotle, or any other historical philosophical figure) will be able to anticipate the contours of Heidegger's objection to the form of these three approaches: namely, that Augustine is a philosopher, not a scientist, and that philosophy "does not have at its disposal an objectively and thoroughly formed material context into which concepts can be integrated in order to receive their determination."[49] From this perspective, the study of Augustine (as of any historical figure) as one particular object within this or that general narrative, however crucial his role in that narrative might be, still entirely misses the force of Augustinian thought as an experience of *life* which occurs within the context not of the history of culture, dogma or science, but in an embodied and sensory existence. Heidegger rather politely declines to point out the sometimes ham-handed way in which these object-historical readings find Augustine congenial or even subservient to their ideological aims, whether Protestant, Catholic, Cartesian or the like, and restricts himself to the argument that in any event these studies are in their very constitution

[49] Martin Heidegger, "Introduction to Phenomenology of Religion." In *The Phenomenology of Religious Life*. Trans. Matthias Fritsch and Jennifer Anna Gosetti-Ferencei. Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2004, 3.

pretending to escape history, in viewing their 'object' as participating in a historical limitation from which they themselves are exempt, and on which they may pass this or that judgment. For this reason, though Heidegger might well have noted that the three figures he discusses have apparently only a very limited familiarity with the texts of Augustine, or at least only a very limited interest in exegesis, this critique would only reach an accidental characteristic of these historical studies. What is essential is that they stubbornly resist a view of Augustine which on the one hand allows him the dignity of sharing the same variegated life which the interpreter experiences and on the other hand acknowledges the limitations of the same on the interpreter. Heidegger puts the point, which has as much to do with the methodology of this mostly exegetical study as with the phenomenological approach to philosophy most generally, into an epigrammatic utterance: "History hits us, and we are history itself."[50] The fact that Heidegger has titled this lecture course "Augustine and Neo-Platonism" cannot help but mislead us: his is decidedly not the concern of much contemporary American readers of Augustine on this question, and Plotinus (for example) is entirely absent from the subsequent pages, as consideration of Augustine's relationship to Platonism (or any such question which attempts to provide an over-arching framework that can account for Augustine's "life and works") would be a betrayal of this central dictum. At the end of this introduction Heidegger gives somewhat more positive content to what the lecture course will instead do:

[50] Heidegger, "Augustine and Neo-Platonism," 124.

> In the objective form of Greek metaphysics and cosmology lies the problem of the meaning of object-theoretical, material science; and the question of the inner experience and the essence of the factical connection harbors a much more radical phenomenon -- merely the defining title here: "factical life" […] This manner of posing the problem leads us, in the treatment of Augustine, to draw on the theological, just as much as on the philosophical, very concretely and determinately, and not, for instance, to extract a philosophy which we then use as a basis. The boundaries between the theological and the philosophical are not to be blurred (no philosophical blurring of theology, no 'intensification' of philosophy pretending to be religious). Rather, precisely going back behind both exemplary foundations of factical life ought to (1) indicate in principle how and what lies 'behind' both, and (2) how a genuine problematic results from this; all this not extra-temporally and for the construction of an approaching or not approaching culture, but itself *in historical enactment*.[51]

This explains at once the form of Heidegger's engagement with Augustine (a close reading, or better, an extended gloss) and its content (a focus on *Conf.* X): the study assumes, and does not try to argue for, Augustine's confession of his current relationship to "factical life" in the present moment as "already somehow compelling,"[52] as possessing a grip on our attention independent from its role in (1) the history of philosophy, or (2) the broader corpus of Augustine's thought and life. Keeping these two parallel contentions in mind is central to understanding Heidegger's reading of Augustine, and although I will argue below that (2) is especially problematic, I will for the moment accept them both provisionally in order to frame my discussion of Heidegger's presentation of the Augustinian thought on experience and perception. One final note: while my presentation of this interpretation will

[51] Heidegger, "Augustine and Neo-Platonism," 124-5.
[52] Heidegger, "Augustine and Neo-Platonism," 125.

here and there gesture towards an eventual critique -- both the implied critiques of Marion and Chrétien and a more intentional critique of my own -- it is important first to present the object of the critique as fairly as possible, and for this reason I will be as judicious as the text allows, restricting myself for the most part to reporting the considerable merits of Heidegger's close reading, which is both a fragmentary portrait of the 20th century's most influential philosopher and a fascinating meditation on Augustine himself.

"Factical life" means an examination of Augustine's loves

Already in the beginning of his "explication" of *Confessions* X, Heidegger displays the two major modes in which this explication will take their shape: careful, if selective, attention to the text in its very literal self-presentation, and brazen gloss on that text. The first of these is at issue in Heidegger's "starting point," his explanation for why he has taken *Confessions* X as his central text:

> As a starting point, we have an orientation about "what at all is actually stated there," "what it is all about." In this respect, Book X can be easily demarcated from the other [sc. previous] books, as Augustine here no longer relates his past, but rather tells what he is now: "[I]n ipso tempore confessionum mearum," *quod sim* [what I am "in the very time of the making of my confessions"].[53]

The central phrase here, which Heidegger is careful to emphasize, is *quod sim*: Augustine's self-portrait is existential, confessing not just what he thinks or perceives or senses as he makes his confession, but what he is, and the mode

[53] Heidegger, "Augustine and Neo-Platonism," 124, citing Augustine, *Conf.* X.3.4.

in which his confession articulates, alters or even constitutes his being. This is correct, but Heidegger's selectivity already begins to exclude the theological and ecclesiological context of Augustine's existential confession, as X.3.4 is mostly concerned with the relationship of this confession to his audience; Augustine's own emphasis lies on the distinction between a prurient reader or auditor who wishes to "penetrate" Augustine's self in the mode of "certain knowledge" (an impossibility) on the one hand, and a charitable reader or auditor who will have access to Augustine's self in the mode of caritas on the other hand: "The love in them believes me." This distinction between "certain knowledge" and love ought to have been winsome to Heidegger, given his resistance to "object-historical" readings which might well bear a similar diagnosis to that offered here by Augustine, but it is here ignored by him.[54] This omission is in continuity with Heidegger's desire to locate *Confessions* X as determinatively different from *Confessions* I-IX, but his (one assumes deliberate) silence on how it relates to the books of the *Confessions* which follow it.

With regard to the second mode, bound to be more controversial, but no less disclosive of the nature of Heidegger's interest in Augustine, we have Heidegger's translations and glosses, for example that of the quotation of the passage of the *Retractiones* which opens the main part of his lecture. With no textual warrant, but arguably considerable philosophical reason, Heidegger renders Augustine's Latin as follows:

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[54] This is an omission which Marion will spend many pages rectifying: cf. *Au Lieu De Soi* passim, esp. Ch 4.

> The thirteen books of my *Confessions* praise God as just and good for my bad and my good actions [*de malis et de bonis meis*] (in my good and my bad *being, life, having-been*), and they excite the human intellect and affect.[55]

The opportunity to insert "being, life, having-been" (where translators would more often give "deeds" or some such) is, one senses, the primary reason Heidegger has opened the *Retractiones* in the first place. The reader interested in textual commentary in a more traditional philological key is being warned at the outset that such is not the nature of Heidegger's lecture; more interesting, leaving aside the question of method, is exactly where he wishes to take the question of the "being, life and having-been" which Augustine takes up in *Confessions* X. This begins in earnest with Heidegger's correct insistence that, among the many things Augustine confesses that he does not know (*nescio*) and thus cannot confess about himself, under the great shadow of the *quaestio* that Augustine is to himself,[56] "one thing is certain for him: that he loves God."[57] The question for Augustine is "what do I love when I love my God, *quid autem amo cum te amo*?," and Heidegger insists that we read this question as literally as possible, arguing against a more facile reading which sees this question as asking "what is this God whom I love" for a strongly phenomenological force within the "*cum*" of "*cum te amo*":

> Augustine attempts to find an answer to this question by investigating what there is which is worthy of love, and by asking whether there is something among them which God

[55] Heidegger, "Augustine and Neo-Platonism," 127.
[56] In Chapter 5 below, I will argue that the verb in this formulation carries more weight than Heidegger (and Marion, for that matter) have seen it bear: they both read this question as a simply inert given, where the 'factus sum' indicates on the contrary a participation in the ontological dynamic of creation.
[57] Heidegger, "Augustine and Neo-Platonism," 130.

> himself is, or what gives a "fulfilling intuition" if he lives in the love of God, what suffices for, or saturates, that which, in the love of God, he intends. ("*Cum te amo*" already indicates an existential stage here -- the stage which has experienced mercy and, in this mercy, has been pulled out of deafness, the stage which can "hear" and see, that is, the stage in which love, in such loving, is opened up for something definite; and only from here on, in the "*cum*," do *caelum et terra* announce God's praise -- not, however, when my attitude is that of natural-scientific research.[58]

The difference emerges: reading *cum* as forcefully temporal undermines a dualistic spiritualizing reading of the following sentence, wherein Augustine denies and then affirms that his love of God is in some sense sensory: *Confessions* X.6.8 is not an argument for "five spiritual senses" in an Origenist mode, which rejects physical light, voice, fragrance and the rest in favor of a merely analogous spiritual light, voice, and fragrance, but argues within the existential sphere inaugurated in the "when I love you" for a different mode of loving the same objects. The resultant question, then, is not "where is this God located -- in physical nature, in my memory, in a purely intellectual sphere, etc.", but "in what mode or manner can God be found in all of these?" The answer to this question, a phenomenology of what we love and how we love it, more aptly ties together the rest of *Confessions* X (as Heidegger has seen) and indeed the whole of the *Confessions* (as Heidegger has neglected to see) than does the popular reading of *Conf.* X as an interior quest for the objective knowledge of God. Within the context of the phenomenological tradition, moreover, this close attention to *Conf.* X.6.8 complicates in what will be a decisive way for Marion and Chrétien the

[58] Heidegger, "Augustine and Neo-Platonism," 130.

question of the subject and its relation to objects: such is Heidegger's reading of the inarguably proto-phenomenological narrative in which Augustine inquires, by way of his "*intentio*," that each part of creation tell him "something" about the God whom he loves, and they respond, by way of their beauty,[59] "*ipse fecit nos.*"[60] Heidegger seizes on a less famous detail from this narrative, that the divine light, voice, scent, touch and taste present in all of the created phenomena which Augustine describes cannot be sensed by those "subjects" (*subditi,* more literally "the subjected ones") whose mode of subjectivity is one of love intended too directly to the objective phenomena. Augustine situates his citation of Romans 1.20 ("the invisible things of God are understood and seen through the things which are made") within the question of why not everybody can perceive God in creation in this way, and in answering it with explicit reference to the "subject" in its etymological sense invites Heidegger's rejection of any simplistic (Husserlian) divide between intending subjects and intended objects. To love things when we love God, at the same time and without contradiction, it is first necessary to recognize an ontological equivalence between things and our selves, both being constituted and animated in their very being by God: "*Deus autem tuus etiam tibi vita vitae est*, Your God is for you your life's life."[61] Within this more transitory (because it is living) phenomenological account of the love of God, in relation to the love of beauty, Heidegger begins to develop Augustine's itinerarium through the soul, itself understood as in tension between loving

[59] **"***Species*" -- really better translated as form, as I'll argue below, Ch 5.
[60] Augustine, *Conf.* X.6.9.
[61] Augustine, *Conf.* X.6.10.

objects (and thus being "subjected" to them in such a way that they obscure their life's life) and loving the God he does not yet know (and thus entering into a reciprocal relationship of *caritas* with created objects, now understood as ontologically parallel to the self).

Heidegger's exclusion of "metaphysics" undermines his commitment to reading Augustine as a living thinker

From this thorny set of inter-related questions arises Heidegger's guiding principle for narrating the rest of Augustine's phenomenology of God and of things:

> Here we already have the "displacement" of the question – cf. 10.20 – under pressure from the phenomena: the question is no longer whether this or that *is* God, but whether I can find God "therein" = "thereby" – "living therein." This happens by comparison with other living beings – objectively – which are in *possession* of the same power. […] Cf., in the following, the back-and-forth of the considerations regarding experience as the means objectively present-at-hand, and as interpretations regarding enactment! The wavering itself is an expression of what? The starting point for the existential breakthrough of the order and object-relation—psychology, or interpretation and grasping of the problem from factical life concretely historical-existentially.[62]

This guiding principle, here offered in characteristically difficult prose, is thankfully clarified in a footnote so crucial to Heidegger's idiosyncratic reading that one wonders why it is a mere footnote:

> The motivation of *progredi* [progressing, rising above] also in *memoria*. The meaning of "going through"? The path and the way stations of the "going through" are predelineated

[62] Heidegger, "Augustine and Neo-Platonism," 132.

> through obsolete traditional psychological classifications. How to break through and render a different sense?[63]

And Heidegger's pursuit of a non-obsolete framework in which to articulate an Augustinian phenomenology asserts itself still more clearly in the following two sections, on *memoria* and the *beata vita*, but here he begins to equivocate so strongly that one is left unsure how much of his interpretation he recognizes as his own, and how much he believes is genuinely Augustine's own intent. For one prominent example, the beginning of Heidegger's explication of *memoria* (which he wisely and studiously leaves untranslated): "What phenomena Augustine brings forth, regarding the content [of *memoria*] only, and above all, *how* he explicates the phenomena and in what basic contexts and determinations […] shatters the framework and the structure of the usual concept,"[64] this latter "usual concept" never quite being brought into focus clearly enough to be attacked with integrity (but often linked to a similarly underdeveloped "Greek-metaphysical" determination of *memoria*). In *memoria* Heidegger rightly detects the Augustinian locus of the present: "And when I am dwelling in *memoria*, I demand at will that […] this or that becomes present to me" and rightly diagnoses this presentation as disarming and "astonishing" to the self.[65] Further, and more impressively, Heidegger allows that for Augustine the sifting between various objects or phenomena (sensuous objects, mathematical or theoretical objects, even the consciousness of the self) is not merely a cognitive or epistemological functioning, but puts ontology into play. This is evidently at play in his

[63] Heidegger, "Augustine and Neo-Platonism," 132 n. 23.
[64] Heidegger, "Augustine and Neo-Platonism," 133.
[65] Heidegger, "Augustine and Neo-Platonism," 133-4.

strong translation of "*et ideo valde sunt*": "they [viz. intellectual objects, here cast misleadingly as "non-linguistic"] possess being in a high degree."[66] Nevertheless, Heidegger makes two connected choices which undermine the strength of this reading. In the first place, while he locates the acts of *memoria* (to gather and give some form of hierarchical order to these various phenomena) within a larger framework of ontological gathering,[67] he does not extend this (as Augustine clearly does in X.29.39, which without explanation falls outside of Heidegger's purview) to the structure of *exitus* and *reditus* which structures the *Confessions* as a whole. In *memoria*, the self is able to gather and give order to phenomena only because it is itself in the process of being gathered *in caritatem*: this omission is surprising, given Heidegger's previously discussed sensitivity to love as at least a hermeneutically decisive consideration for approaching the *Confessions*, and shows some fissures in his theoretical commitment to respecting Augustine's "facticity." The second, and at first glance less important, decision occurs in his discussion of the ontological category of the image, which Heidegger briefly raises[68] as an example of Augustine's use of aporia as a rhetorical device: images are at once present in *memoria*, but in their very being as images are not truly present, only *quasi praesentia*. I will argue below that the role of images in Augustine's proto-phenomenology is crucial, and that it is crucial that this be read in a larger context of Augustinian thought which does not exclude his meditations on the *imago dei* in Genesis; for now I

[66] Heidegger, "Augustine and Neo-Platonism," 135. Cf. Augustine, *Conf.* X.12.19.
[67] Heidegger, "Augustine and Neo-Platonism," 135.
[68] Heidegger, "Augustine and Neo-Platonism," 137.

restrict myself to pointing out that Heidegger hardly skirts near this decisive category. Both of these omissions point to the conclusion of Heidegger's reading of *memoria*. His attempt at freeing Augustine from the "obsolete" psychological articulation of *memoria*, in its clumsy circumnavigation of the *exitus* and *reditus* structure and of the role of images and the imagination, really tries to aim directly at the self, which he radicalizes beyond Augustine's own text: the self is no longer only the subject of an *exitus* and a *reditus*, but the very movement of *exitus* and *reditus* itself:

> I am not only the *one from* whose place the search proceeds and who moves toward some place, or the one *in* whom the search takes place; but the enactment of the search itself is something of the self. What does it mean that I "am"?[69]

Heidegger's fetishizing of "authenticity" has some justification in Augustine, but ignores the ontology of images which grounds it

We have come far away from the Husserlian stable, if entirely formal, subject: not only is Heidegger's Augustinian self unstable to a limited degree, it is entirely constituted by its movement and its search. But its search for what, its movement towards what? Viewed within the context of the entire *Confessions*, it is difficult to avoid reading this theologically; *Conf.* I.1.1 announces (echoing Genesis 1.26) that the self is made "*ad te*," in movement toward God. But by restricting his reading to *Confessions* X, Heidegger is able to put a characteristically impersonal gloss on the answer to this central question:

[69] Heidegger, "Augustine and Neo-Platonism," 141.

> At what am I directing my effort, and what escapes me? (In anticipation: God as *vita vitae* [the life of life]. But this does not have to have the formed-out, concrete, traditional sense, but really has an existential sense of movement.[70]

Heidegger finds ample ground on which to elaborate this "existential sense of movement" in the margins of Augustine's description of the *beata vita*.[71] As with *memoria*, Heidegger reads Augustine on the *beata vita* sensitively but incompletely, and begins to express some disappointment with what he finds, and so to display a critical orientation which elsewhere lies more or less dormant in his exposition. The sensitivity, even the sympathy, of Heidegger's reading of Augustine resides primarily in his re-articulation of "*beata vita*" as "authentic existence":

> What the happy life is in accordance with the established mode of access and mode of having is to be established at the same time, and by way of, the explication of the How of having. The primacy of the relational sense, or of the sense of enactment, is remarkable. – What it is: this question leads to the *How* of having it. The *situation* of enactment, authentic existence. – Appropriate the "having" such that the having becomes a "being."[72]

The *beata vita* is defined, by Augustine and by an impressed Heidegger, as essentially different from material things and intelligible things alike, in that it is never simply presented to the self but must be desired and sought actively. This is the meaning of the 'relational sense' or 'sense of enactment' in Heidegger's gloss. He finds this so notable and so perceptive that he leaves

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[70] Heidegger, "Augustine and Neo-Platonism," 140-1.
[71] Augustine, *Conf.* X.20.29-27.38. Heidegger oddly treats X.20.29-23.24 as the entirety of the relevant pericope, thus stopping short of the way in which Augustine himself answers the problems of the *beata vita*, namely by way of humility: "Your best servant is the person who does not attend so much to hearing what he himself wants as to willing what he has heard from you," *Conf.* X.27.37.
[72] Heidegger, "Augustine and Neo-Platonism," 143.

to one side the more obvious issue of how these passages situate Augustine within the eudaimonistic ethical tradition, for what is at play is not, like virtue, interpersonal: Augustine's discussion of the *beata vita*, Heidegger tells us, in its very constitution as Augustine's thought and not our own, "only tells us that and how we experience a determinate What in which we take delight. But the being-delighted itself? Radical reference to the self, authentic facticity. – Something which cannot be taken over from others at all."[73] Into this parallel register of a "radical facticity" Heidegger casts Augustine's critique of "those who think that the happy life is found elsewhere" than in God.[74] For Augustine, these people (assuredly including himself, through most of the *Confessions*) pose the problem of why, though everybody wishes to life happily, not all live in such a way as to attain this; the solution Augustine offers, and Heidegger ignores or rejects, is to filter the eudaimonism which Augustine never questions through an ontology of images.[75] This move is consistent with Augustine's discussion of evil as *privatio boni*, and the human will's attachment to relatively lesser goods as a weakness or an illness rather than a radical and inexplicable attachment to evil. But Heidegger shows no awareness of Augustine's larger ethical and ontological project, which leads his close reading of *Conf.* X.20.29-23.24 into two related errors: an artificial isolation of the self from any communal context into a bizarre individual subjectivism, and a de-personalization of the

[73] Heidegger, "Augustine and Neo-Platonism," 143-4.
[74] Augustine, *Conf.* X.22.32ff.
[75] Cf. *Conf.* X.22.32: "Nevertheless their will remains drawn towards some image of the true joy."

beata vita as *veritas*, which divorces Augustine's text from the obviously Christological and Trinitarian context in which in appears in *Conf.* X. The first of these is perhaps somewhat more surprising within the context of Heidegger's early thought, and so deserves a relatively long quotation:

> Formally indicated, the *beata vita* as such, and in relation to the how of its existence, is one. It really concerns the individual, *how* he appropriates it. There is *one* true one, and especially this, in turn, is for the individual. […] [Those who do not strive for the *beata vita* authentically] "*non tantum volunt, quantum sat est ut valeant*" [they do not will so much as is sufficient to give them the strength], -- they do not project this from out of themselves toward themselves as "possibility," in such a way that it would suffice to take possession of themselves in the first place. The concern for it is lacking to such an extent that it is not really present, precisely because it becomes at object in its genuine manner only in such concern.[76]

This sense of possibility or projection of the self from itself beyond itself is indeed Augustinian, although Heidegger neglects to mention that he has replaced the term which this movement defines for Augustine – namely worship – with the neologistic 'authenticity.' With this move Heidegger hints toward fetishizing the Augustinian description of movement by revising or removing the terminus towards which the self moves:

> In factical life, human beings somehow intimate something right, live in it and for it as something significant. Inasmuch as this "living" and experiencing is already an absorption in factical life, an abandoning oneself over to it, it is, and will become, at the same time that which fulfills the effort toward truth. "*Hoc quod amant velint esse veritatem*" [what they love they want to be the truth] – what is loved at the moment, a loving into which one grows, through tradition, fashion, convenience, the anxiety of disquiet, the anxiety of suddenly standing in vacuity; precisely this becomes the "truth" itself,

[76] Heidegger, "Augustine and Neo-Platonism," 145-6.

> in and with this falling enactment.. The truth and its meaning are taken even into this modification – that is, one does not only retreat from the vacuity, but even more, and primarily, from the "movement" toward it.[77]

Those who are content with their image of joy (though it must be again emphasized that Heidegger does not make use of the language of images) are to be castigated primarily, for the Heideggerean Augustine, for their false sense of stability, and for their desire to stand still, refusing the sort of gleeful movement from one thing to another which characterizes authentic facticity. There is textual warrant for much of this in Augustine's definition of the *beata vita* as *gaudium*. But it is extremely telling that Heidegger accepts this definition only by half:

> He who loves the *veritas sola* – "per quam vera sunt omnia" [by which all things else are true] – *sine interpellante molestia* [without any discomfort interfering], without any burden, without that which pulls him back, without an inauthentic, convenient, self-concealing willfulness – will probably have the authentic *beata vita*. *Beata vita* is *gaudium*, more closely, *gaudium de veritate* [joy in the truth], understood as existentially *related* to the *vita beata*. (By way of *veritas*, however, we have, at the same time, the invasion of Greek philosophy).[78]

Leave aside for a moment the arbitrariness of this assertion that *gaudium* is existentially acceptable but *veritas* is Greek and metaphysical: what is more interesting in this claim, and what sets the stage more decisively for Marion's and Chrétien's readings, is the outright refusal of Augustine's Christological and Trinitarian resolution to the existential problems of the self, which arises in full force with Heidegger's lengthy examination of *cura*, *molestia* and *tentatio*,

[77] Heidegger, "Augustine and Neo-Platonism," 147.
[78] Heidegger, "Augustine and Neo-Platonism," 148.

the remainder of his lectures. Heidegger chooses to treat these entirely under the shadow of the deformed self,[79] which "plunges headlong" into the "beautifully formed" (*formosa*) things of the world. He argues that the whole of *Conf.* X hinges on this, its most famous chapter.

In excluding theology, Heidegger subverts Augustine's ontology

In a move which Marion will repeat, Heidegger discusses the long and important quotation ("*sero te amavi*…") from this chapter with primary reference to the self, secondary reference to the act of loving, and only a passing glance at God.

> Thus everything depends upon the authentic hearing, upon the *How* of the questioning posture, of the wanting-to-hear (…) The question of *where* I find God has turned into a discussion of the conditions of experiencing God, and that comes to a head in the problem of what I am myself.[80]

His explicit gloss on this phrase -- "late did I get to the level of factical life where I put myself in the position to love you" -- quietly brushes aside the sense, entirely obvious to even a careless reader of X.27.38, in which this love is a response to the sensuous beauty of Christ,[81] placing the emphasis instead on the self's attempts to keep itself mobile and open, to the greatest extent possible unformed by external objects. The gloss on the remainder of X.27.38 which forms the closing lines of a long preamble to a longer set of

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[79] Cf. Augustine, *Conf.* X.27.38.
[80] Heidegger, "Augustine and Neo-Platonism," 150.
[81] It is perhaps Marion's central task to correct this by reading not only this love but also the self which loves as such a response, under a rubric of a determining and primordial givenness.

expositions (of *cura*, *tentatio* and *molestia*), are demonstrative of this almost obsessive fixation on the self, and of the hermeneutical distance he must traverse in order to arrive at it:

> I plunged headlong into the world and things as *formosa*, beautifully formed, impressive and announcing something significant, so that they captured me; and my desire to know made an effort at it – but *deformis inruebam*, I myself was not in the form, I did not have the Being, which is the genuine Being of a self. "*Tetigisti me, et exarsi in pacem tuam*" [You touched me, and I am burning for Your peace].[82]

The transition here from Heideggerean gloss to Augustinian quotation is abrupt and jarring, at least when one reads it,[83] and it raises the question of why Heidegger bothers to quote this sentence at all. Both the second person agency (*tetigisti*) and the emphasis on peace (*pacem tuam*) would have emphatically undercut Heidegger's concerns, if he had ruminated on them even briefly, and only the sense of ardor or burning (*exarsi*) occupies his interests in the following pages.

Though the aforementioned expositions run their course for several pages -- nearly half of the entire lecture course is devoted to unpacking *molestia* as the 'basic character of factical life' -- I will forego a similarly extended attention to these pages, as they follow rather uncontroversially from the premises which Heidegger has set up in the portions of the lecture to which I have been attending thus far. This is not to deny their intrigue and their value; several reflections on discrete moments

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[82] Heidegger, "Augustine and Neo-Platonism," 151.
[83] One assumes that Heidegger's auditors were not alerted to any distinction between Augustine's and Heidegger's thoughts.

of Augustine's description of the various *tentationes* of the senses and of interpersonal life are perceptive, if not terribly relevant to the rest of his reading. Aside from these brief attentions to particularities of the Augustinian text, the last half of the lecture course is insistent, almost repetitive, in its drive towards describing Augustinianism as fundamentally a play of historical *curae*, in an original "falling" motion from an (under-theorized) unity to a dissolute, scattered manifold (*multum*), and in a "counter-movement" of authenticity which attempts to contain itself (an interesting twist on the Latin *continentia*) in an existentially honest direction. Heidegger's fixation on the chapters of *Conf.* X which describe the various obstacles to this authenticity[84] prevents him from elaborating on the object of this direction. His numerous invocations of a break between "phenomenological" concern with the "how?" life is directed and the (illegitimate) "theological" concern with the question "to what?" life is directed[85] make a certain amount of sense, once we have forgiven Heidegger for his eccentrically selective reading. But this forgiveness ought not to come without rigorous objection: from an Augustinian perspective, it is simply impermissible to ignore an ontological context to the phenomenological project. This failing, as I have noted above, is most obvious in the omission of the rest of the *Confessions* from phenomenological consideration; it is more subtly present in Heidegger's refusal to consider even the whole of the tenth book of the *Confessions* -- he stops just before Augustine begins to reflect on humility, on Christ as

[84] Augustine, *Conf.* X.28.39-X.39.64.
[85] Heidegger, "Augustine and Neo-Platonism," 155, 170, 177, and 181.

mediator, on the incarnation and on the sacraments, with a culminating nod towards the Eucharist[86] which would, in concern with Augustine's thought on creation, have left Heidegger's description of life as *molestia* radically untenable:

> …a How of experiencing, a burden to, and an endangering of, having-of-oneself -- in full facticity. This having-of-oneself is, as factical, such that it enacts this endangering itself and forms it. In the concrete and genuine enactment of experience, it gives itself the possibility of falling, but in its ownmost radical self-concern, it gives itself at the same time the full, concrete, factical "opportunity" to arrive at the being of its ownmost life.[87]

Heidegger's subversion of Augustinian theology obscures Augustinian phenomenology, and ultimately returns to the stability of the subject

It will be the project of Marion, of Chrétien and of my final chapter to try to correct these omissions, and suggest appropriate reconfigurations of the themes which Heidegger has rendered as central to the phenomenological tradition's reading of Augustine (being, life, the self) in the light of the most relevant theological data. For now, I wish only to note a moment of quiet irony which discloses a central problem in Heidegger's presentation of Augustine. In rendering *continentia*, that which Heidegger rightly sees as serving as a buffer against the *tentationes* and as reinforcing a partially positive dynamic of *cura*, as something which God commands, but not something which God also grants (the famous prayer, *da quod iubes et iube quod vis*, is surprisingly missing from Heidegger's considerations), he not only

[86] Augustine, *Conf.* X.43.70,
[87] Heidegger, "Augustine and Neo-Platonism," 183.

runs a considerable risk of Pelagianism; he also restores, at the last minute and as through the back door, a sort of reversed Husserlian subjective stability, where the self ultimately grounds and assures its own selfhood, albeit only in its willingness to endanger its own being. Extracting phenomenology from Augustine, and casting aside the theology which surrounds it and pervades it, is not only a process which self-consciously betrays both the Augustinian text and the Augustinian spirit; it also ends in a strangely conservative motion towards "a life whose being is grounded in a radical having-of-oneself."[88] Perhaps it is not too crude to draw a direct line from Heidegger's refusal to read *Conf.* X in the broader context of the rest of Augustine's thought and life to this last-moment retreat into idealist subjectivity, even if this subjectivity begins to strain in its tragic outlook towards an impersonal ontology.

The subject of *Conf.* XI overlaps significantly with *Dasein*

On, then, to *Being and Time*,[89] and here we must tread carefully. As intimated above, *Being and Time* refers to Augustine explicitly only four times. Augustine appears, then, with considerably less frequency than Descartes or Aristotle, but with considerably more frequency than Aquinas or other scholastic figures. It would therefore be foolhardy (if still tempting) to try to read the whole of this opus as a gloss on the *Confessions* (although the

[88] Heidegger, "Augustine and Neo-Platonism," 182.
[89] Martin Heidegger. *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York, Harper & Row, 1962).

temptation to point out that the reverse holds true is too great to resist: four references to Augustine, and very little scholarly discourse; two references to Aquinas, and a whole industry of debates about the extent to which Heidegger is a scholastic!).

The line from the "Augustine and Neo-Platonism" lecture to *Being and Time* could obviously be drawn too sharply, but does this mean that it does not exist? Put another way, the question is: to what extent does the account of subject-object co-constitutivity found in "The Phenomenology of Religious Life" anticipate that found in *Being and Time*? To that end, I here present a brief report of the major thematics of *Being and Time* as they strike an ear trained more by Augustine than by other obvious influences on Heidegger (Kant, Husserl, Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, Dilthey…). Again, the point is not to establish that *Being and Time* is a crypto-Augustinian text, put into a German code to hide the obvious influence, nor even to set up a watertight genealogy from Heidegger to Marion and Chrétien (or for that matter to Sartre or to Derrida) by way of Augustine. I aim solely to alert those readers unfamiliar with Heidegger, and to remind those much more familiar than I, of some of the key dynamics of *Being and Time*, and to put forth the rather uncontroversial assertion that, if the 21st century phenomenological game is played at least in part on Augustinian turf, this is not a wholly new or wholly arbitrary phenomenon.[90]

[90] The most thorough, and balanced, discussion of the question of Augustine's place in the pre-history of *Being and Time* is that of Theodore Kisiel, *The Genesis of Heidegger's Being and Time* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995) 69-115, particularly 105ff; see also his extensive summary of "Augustine and Neo-

We may start with what Heidegger himself – in a rare and awkward autobiographical remark – tells us about Augustine's role in *Being and Time*, specifically with regard to the prominent phenomenon of care and its linguistic and conceptual history:

> Even as early as the Stoics, μεριμνη was a firmly established term, and it recurs in the New Testament, becoming *sollicitudo* in the Vulgate. The way in which 'care' is viewed in the foregoing existential analytic of Dasein, is one which has grown upon the author in connection with his attempts to Interpret the Augustinian (i.e., Helleno-Christian) anthropology with regard to the foundational principles reached in the ontology of Aristotle.[91]

The trajectory in Heidegger's writing from dealing with Augustine (in *The Phenomenology of Religious Life*) to dealing with Aristotle (in *Being and Time* and certainly elsewhere) is well-known, and I do not wish to dispute that in many ways *Being and Time*'s Aristotelianism is more deeply imprinted than its Augustinianism. This is true both in its language of choice (Greek) and in parts of its very structure (e.g. its opening quotation, or the governing preoccupation of delineating Being rather than beings). Nevertheless, the "Helleno-Christian anthropology," imported almost entirely intact from *The Phenomenology of Religious Life*, when run through the machines of Aristotelian

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Platonism", ibid. 192-217. Kisiel concludes that Augustine's importance for *Being and Time* is primarily structural: "Oddly, it is the somewhat more 'generic' and so impoverished Augustinian schema which begins to anticipate the structure of BT.. The core infinitive …, caring (curare), on the one end of the diagram is tried by the opposing tendencies of falling into disperson in the many or rising toward an integrated and unified self. On the other end, it is ontologically oriented toward thigs of use versus things to be enjoyed for their own sake. Especially the latter distinction, amplified by *Nicomachean Ethics* 6, points to the two extant Divisions of BT" (219).

[91] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 492 n.7.

ontology, is the animating force of *Being and Time*. No doubt the anthropology is more complicated than Augustine, even than a Heideggerean limitation of Augustine. Also no doubt that anthropology, Christian or otherwise, is emphatically not Heidegger's stated aim:

> Thus, by our ontological Interpretation of Dasein, we have been brought to the *existential conception* of care from Dasein's pre-ontological interpretation of itself as 'care.' Yet the analytic of Dasein is not aimed at laying an ontological basis for anthropology; its purpose is one of fundamental ontology.[92]

Nevertheless the opposite remains true: that Heidegger allows a certain Stoicized Augustinian anthropology – and it is quite important that Heidegger's Augustine is always and everywhere Stoicized, and never in any sense Platonic -- to give shape to his inquiry, both selecting the phenomena which will be laid bare for his analysis and more fundamentally limiting the horizon against which they appear. These phenomena, and their linkings to the *Confessions*, are plentiful. Foremost there is the question of *cura*, translated or revised into *Sorge*. Less prominently, we could note the distinction between *timor castus* and *timor servilis*[93] and a quick nod of the head to Augustine (alongside Pascal) for their work in elaborating that we come to things first in the affective order and only later in the epistemic order.[94] Finally, in this list of lesser Augustinianisms, we ought to note the lengthiest engagement with an Augustinian text to appear in *Being and Time*, namely the discussion of *curiositas* as a particularly sharp quotidian way of relating to

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[92] Heidegger, *Being and Time,* 244.
[93] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 492 n.4
[94] Heidegger, *Being and Time,* 178 and 492 n.5.

beings. Here it is possible to trace a departure from the analysis of "Augustine and Neo-Platonism": Heidegger is in *Being and Time* much more careful not to recommend what he has diagnosed as Dasein's persistent need for novelty for novelty's sake.[95] These themes are, however much they illuminate small corners of the Heideggerean universe, admittedly rather minor, particularly when compared to the sheer number of citations of Aristotle marshalled and discussed at length with regard to Heidegger's object of inquiry, Being. Indeed Augustine's ontology is conspicuous in *Being and Time* for its absence – the Heideggerean scholar who would guess that Augustine never worried himself with ontological questions will be easily forgiven for this mis-estimation.

Being **: Aristotle ::** ***Time*** **: Augustine**

I would like, though, to hazard a more provocative thesis, which confessedly finds little in the way of obvious textual support. To wit: if Aristotle is the primary catalyst for Heidegger's thought of *Being*, Augustine is the primary, if utterly unacknowledged, catalyst for his thought of *Time*.

Theoreticians of time are without exception villains in Heidegger's account: on more than one occasion, he refers to the "traditional" conception of time, a tradition which begins with Aristotle and ends with Bergson. In this conception, time is the "ontical criterion for naively

[95] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 215-7.

discriminating various realms of entities."[96] It is the unsophisticated and under-analyzed flow of facilely defined "nows", the banal tickings of the clock, the "course of time" wherein moments are Present-to-hand, and no discussion of time – from Aristotle to Bergson, running through Descartes and Kant – assumes this basic meaning.[97] Against this – indeed, to *destroy* this – ontic conception of time, Heidegger proposes an ontological definition of time as that which *primordially* determines Being, and not merely that which accidentally provides a setting and a context for any given being:

> The fact that in every "now," no matter how momentary, it is *in each case already* now, must be conceived in terms of something which is 'earlier' *still* and from which every "now" stems: that is to say, it must be conceived in terms of the ecstatical stretching-along of that temporality which is alien to any Continuity of something present-at-hand but which, for its part, presents the condition for the possibility of access to anything continuous that is present-at-hand.[98]

This ecstasy and this stretching, presented at a climactic portion of Heidegger's argument as the ontological horizon for the appearance of Being, cannot help but remind us of the Augustinian *distentio animi*. Indeed, that Dasein is constituted by its futurity, by its openness and directedness to potential, rather than by its presence and its actuality,[99] has upset Thomist readers of Heidegger, but it is formally nearly identical to the *inquietum cor* of *Confessions* I. More to the point, Augustine has also discussed and rejected, in

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[96] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 39.
[97] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 41ff.
[98] Heidegger, *Being and Time,* 476.
[99] Cf. 372: "By the term 'futural, we do not here have in view a "now" which has *not yet* become 'actual' and which sometime *will be* for the first time. We have in view the coming in which Dasein, in its ownmost potentiality-for-Being, comes towards itself."

the eleventh book of the *Confessions*, the common-sense "ontic" definition of time in favor of precisely such a *distentio animi*. It is hard to imagine that a student of Husserl, who has recommended that anybody interested in time ought to read *Confessions* XI, is unfamiliar with this text, particularly when that student not only edited for publication the text in which Husserl made this recommendation, but also gave a lecture series on the book immediately preceding it!

Two plausible explanations remain: that the *distentio animi* worked its way through Heidegger's subconscious to such an extent that he did not recognize his solution to the problems of time as anything other than his own, or that he had some reason for eliding and obscuring this influence; between these two, it is difficult to choose. In support of the latter explanation, I can try to articulate at least one respect in which Heidegger would have found Augustine's account deficient: namely, that Augustine's *distentio animi* is surrounded on all sides by Scriptural exegesis and speculation regarding creation and eternity, all of which Heidegger brushes aside in a footnote as "defined with an orientation towards the idea of 'constant' presence-at-hand."[100] Heidegger leaves open the possibility that some account of eternity, arrived at "by the *via negationis et eminentiae*," might supplement an ontological account of time and of temporality after this ontological account has already been established phenomenologically,[101] but rejects as not worthy of discussion the suggestion that a revealed or

[100] Heidegger, *Being and Time,* 499 n. 13.
[101] Heidegger, *Being and Time,* 499 n. 13.

philosophically determined eternity can found and initiate, even in the mode of aporia, such a phenomenology; this is of course Augustine's method. To be clear: it would be unrealistic to demand that Heidegger accept Augustinian revelation as a basis for a phenomenologically determined ontology. But Heidegger could have allowed that Augustine's account is certainly not as naïve as that ontic account which both Heidegger and Augustine describe and reject; only a prejudice against the conceptualization of eternity which automatically imagines that such a conceptualization is an inauthentic act of fleeing death precludes him from seeing that *Confessions* XI mirrors his own definition in much of its content, if not its tone.

More is at stake here than bibliography. That Augustine is unacknowledged as a source of some of the more influential philosophy of the twentieth century can certainly rankle me, or the Augustinian guild, but hardly anybody else ought to be upset by merely this plagiarism. More generally upsetting is the result of this omission, that by it Heidegger escapes the need to argue for the conclusions he reaches, and more particularly for the departures he makes from Augustine. Heidegger and Augustine agree on a certain uncanny and destabilizing definition of temporality as an ecstatic force which centrally determines both human being and (created) Being in general; this definition leads both of them to an anthropology (and perhaps an ethics) of temptation and of profligacy, and especially of ecstatic being-towards-*something* as the means of unification of the self's possibilities. But it leads Heidegger to give this something the name of death, and Augustine to

give it the name of God;[102] it leads Heidegger to analysis of fear and anxiety, and Augustine to "burning love," to hope and to prayer. For both of them, time gives the human being its shape and its fundamental orientation to the world, and for both of them time does not exist except that it tends toward non-being.[103] But for Augustine, this time tends toward non-being not due to an inscrutably arbitrary and tragic caprice, but due instead to a transcendent *Ratio* which makes itself manifest also as *Verbum* and *Principium*, *Virtus* and *Sapientia*.[104] I have no wish to over-state my case; there are almost certainly reasons internal to Heidegger's system to ignore the aspects of Augustine's analysis of time which differ from his own. Heidegger's forgetfulness or refusal to acknowledge his debt renders any discussion of these reasons speculative at best. But even if he had, as I wish, brought these debts out into the light, and even if he had entered into a good-faith argument with Augustine, it seems unlikely that he would have avoiding the trap which Husserl fell into: ignoring context. *Confessions* XI is, as Marion's analysis in particular is willing to acknowledge, not a discrete philosophical unit, however sophisticated and compelling (or not) it might be; it is instead a clearing of the throat, a preamble to Augustine's approach to Genesis. This is not merely proper Christian piety. It also demarcates the boundaries of

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[102] Augustine's similar discussion does include death, but only as part of a rhyming dynamic: "A thing dies and comes into being [*moritur et oritur*] inasmuch as it is not what it was and becomes what it was not." *Conf.* XI.7.9.
[103] Augustine, *Conf.* XI.14.17.
[104] Augustine, *Conf.* XI.8.10-9.11.

Augustinian phenomenology: "*nullum tempus esse posse sine creatura*; without creation, there can be no time."[105]

By ignoring theology, Husserl and Heidegger misconstrue the self

Formally, both Husserl and Heidegger are guilty of falsely distinguishing between Augustine the philosopher and Augustine the theologian; the Augustine who claims Christianity as *vera philosophia* will not permit one to select portions of his work as philosophically interesting or coherent without a much more rigorous discussion of the principles of such a selection. This formal error leads, at least indirectly, to the conclusions that their more theologically minded heirs will most concern themselves with disputing. The Husserlian epoché and Heideggerean phenomenology tout court, not unlike the Cartesian *meditatio* before them, are in some sense spiritual exercises – but to what end? For Husserl, the self is apparent to itself, so long as it practices this epoché, restricted to the epistemic realm, which it can of its own devices do. For Heidegger, the self is opaque to itself – or at least, the practices needed for the self to access itself are not theorized – and it cannot of its own devices or otherwise do anything to remediate the situation of finitude and time, construed as tragically insurmountable. For Augustine (and for Marion and Chrétien), the self is always opaque to itself, though this opacity can have both troublesome aspects (which can be mitigated) and positive aspects; on the whole, the self's finitude and its

[105] Augustine, *Conf.* XI.30.40.

temporality are not construed as insurmountable obstacles, but as themselves gifts. The philosophy and practice of Augustine thus differs fundamentally in aim from the philosophical practices of Husserl and of Heidegger, which appear, tenebrously, in Augustine's wake. We shall see that the more closely one attends to Augustine, and the less one allows one's reading to be pre-determined by (for example) Heideggerean commitments, the more these practices and exercises emerge as tools to better appreciate and celebrate the finitude of the self, and to enjoy all other created things as also gifts. Indeed the final chapter of the present work will suggest some ways in which a fuller reading of Augustine, which attends especially to the dimensions of Augustinian proto-phenomenology which are concerned with the Trinity and with the account in Genesis of the becoming of all things can better account for some of the bizarre locutions of *Conf.* X-XI on Augustinian grounds, but also can salvage a more deeply restless ground for the concerns of phenomenology itself, viz. a Trinitarian transcendence and an account of the co-constitution of subjects and objects in the imagination. Before that, the two intervening chapters will describe and begin to assess the efforts of Marion and Chrétien to resituate Augustine in precisely this way.

III. Marion and Augustine

Abstract

This chapter contains a sustained engagement with Jean-Luc Marion's important 2008 monograph on Augustine. Much like Heidegger provided a more compelling and more detailed exposition of Augustine's relevance to phenomenology than Husserl did, Marion provides an account of the question which is similarly more compelling, more creative, and more attentive to linguistic and conceptual details. For this reason my approach to Marion is largely expository. But much like Heidegger remained fundamentally in line with many of Husserl's most decisive errors, so too Marion's reading, in its aversion especially to metaphysics, calls for serious criticism. In fact, Marion's reliance on an impoverished and dark Heideggerean ontology is apparent in his treatment of nearly every major Augustinian *topos* which he entertains: the *confessio*, *memoria*, *veritas*, the *distentio animi*, and the relationship between *ego* and *mundus* via love and praise. In each of these areas, I point to a pattern wherein Marion's bold and internally consistent insights into the Augustinian text is less averse to theology than that of his forerunners, but equally averse to metaphysics, and so while it brings many small illuminations to the corners of the Augustinian world, it fails to offer a compelling synthesis of these insights, and so calls forth (contrary to Marion's intentions, but for reasons purely internal to the

phenomenological project) a wider-ranging reading of Augustine's ontology, and his relationship to Platonic philosophy.

Au Lieu De Soi **is an important text in the trajectory of Marion's thought, and in the history of phenomenology**

Jean-Luc Marion acknowledges that his recent book on Augustine[106] was to be expected: the trajectory of his historical project and that of his phenomenological project, not easily separated one from the other, both point back to a radicality which precedes Descartes. *Au Lieu De Soi* will very likely become an important text for situating Marion's place in the phenomenological tradition, and indeed asks for a newly conceived account of the role of Augustine in determining that tradition – a role which pierces through Derrida, Ricoeur, Heidegger and Husserl, with each to some extent claiming Augustine as their own, such that the phenomenological tradition, like the Reformation, might well be best narrated as a 'history of competing Augustinianisms.' Nevertheless, the most urgent question which *Au Lieu De Soi* raises is best put from a theological perspective: is Marion's latest turn, or rather return,[107] to Augustine, particularly on the heels of *The Erotic*

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[106] *Au Lieu De Soi: L'approche de Saint Augustin*. Paris: PUF, 2008, 9. All translations from this text are my own: I will only provide the French when my translation fails to capture important nuance.

[107] Marion's first articles were expositions of St Augustine: see "La saisie trinitaire selon l'Esprit de Saint Augustin," *Résurrection* 28 (1968): 66-94, and "Distance et béatitude: sur le mot capacitas chez Saint Augustin," *Résurrection* 29 (1968): 58-80. The young Marion is to be commended for understanding that the most important thing a Frenchman could be doing in 1968 is reading Augustine carefully.

Phenomenon,[108] most accurately interpreted as a phenomenological claiming of Augustine, or as an Augustinian re-configuring of phenomenology? In the former case, Marion's translations of Augustinian formulas (*confessio* as 'reduction', *veritas* as 'the saturated phenomenon', *ego* as 'the gifted one' etc.) would be read as imperialistic or even narcissistic impositions which would tell us much about Marion and little about Augustine; in the latter, as admissions that Marion's project has, all along, been more Augustinian, and thus more deeply theological, than even he (let alone we) have known, which would, whatever insights it might bring to our understanding of Augustine, defamiliarize the terrain of Marion's own thought, ridding us of misinterpretations, both Cartesian and Heideggerean. If nothing else, *Au Lieu De Soi* proves Marion as a very careful and imaginative reader of Augustine, and one whose arguments and translations deserve similarly careful attention: my approach will then be largely exegetical, tracing out the skeletal framework of *Au Lieu De Soi*, with brief critical comments salted in liberally.

The genre and the structure of the *Confessions* already gestures towards a phenomenological "erotic reduction"

As a methodological statement, Marion launches his first chapter, *La confessio ou la réduction*, by arguing that the novelty of the *Confessions* emerges not at the level of content, but primarily at the level of *form*: whether they

[108] Jean-Luc Marion, *The Erotic Phenomenon*. Trans. Stephen E. Lewis. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2007.

speak of the self, the will, memory, time, Scripture, creation or God (as they do, in roughly this order) they 'inscribe' these topics in a first-person narrative. The observation might seem banal, but Marion shows the originality of this approach by questioning it radically: 'Who speaks what, about what, precisely, and to whom?'[109] *Au Lieu De Soi* is thus to be conceived of as an attack not only on the interpretation of the *Confessions* as the first autobiography, but on the very concept of *autos* which this genre presupposes and reinforces: the *Confessions* are indeed a writing of a life, but specifically and intentionally *not* a life of the self, but one 'in lieu of the self.' In placing such high importance (a move which is in obvious continuity with Heidegger) on the first-person singular narration of the *Confessions*, Marion does not wish to neglect Augustine's other works; in fact, he views the imperative to take seriously *De trinitate* and *De civitate dei*, as well as more centrally Augustine's commentaries on Scripture, as one imposed by the nature and the trajectory of the *Confessions* themselves, and the failure to obey this imperative as an essential symptom of inappropriately 'philosophical' readings of Augustine.[110] Instead, this first-person narration is correctly viewed as 'perfectly aporetic,' in other words as problematizing any external definitions of the genre of the *Confessions* as theological, philosophical, literary or autobiographical, in the speculative senses of each of these genres. Such a problematization insists on an interpretation which takes its 'aim' and its 'point of departure' from terms purely internal to the text: namely, an

[109] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 30.
[110] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 21.

interpretation of the *Confessions* as *confessio*, understood in its double sense as confession of sin and of praise.[111] In generic terms, then, the *Confessions* both presuppose and aim at what they inaugurate in their first six words: *magnus es Domine, et laudabilis valde* is here understood as a confession of praise, which intends through the confession of sin to confess praise more adequately. Showing the clear influence of Jean-Louis Chrétien,[112] Marion claims that 'to praise does not designate one act of speech among others … [but] the only voice worthy of access' to God.[113] Marion lingers long on these first six words, noting in them precisely the problematic which he will apply to the whole of the praise instantiated and described in the *Confessions*: Who speaks these words, and to whom? Noting that they are first of all a quotation of Scripture, a conflation of Psalms, and secondly framed in terms of the desire to praise which humanity, or more precisely humanity as 'a small part of creation,' possesses and aspires to, Marion begins to develop the *confessio* of the *Confessions* as at once the voice of Scripture, Aurelius Augustinus, the reader, the Church and finally the whole of creation:[114] 'The first phrase of the *Confessions* is therefore articulated from the beginning in a demand (God

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111 Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 31.
112 Cf. Jean-Louis Chretien, *Saint Augustin et les actes de parole.* Paris*:* PUF, 2002.
113 Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 32.
114 Although reading all of this from *Conf.* 1.1.1 is an impressive exegetical act, none of it is new to Marion's project save arguably the move to incorporate creation in this reduction. On this move, which finds Marion wavering between calling it 'the cosmic liturgy' and asserting that it has nothing to do with the kosmos, and the specifically theurgic dimension of which Marion rather ahistorically leaves out, cf. Ch. 5 below.

is given to be praised), then in a response (in fact, humanity does praise him, as does the whole of creation).'[115]

In order to get from this point of departure to this chapter's ultimate and titular claim that this *confessio* functions as an erotic reduction, Marion argues that this *confessio* and this praise is neither conceptual nor speculative, because, faced with the incommensurability of finite praise and the infinitely praised, the *confessio* 'speaks in a speech which predicates nothing' *of* God, but speaks *to* God and leads the speaker *to* God, converting him from a *locuteur* to an *interloqué*.[116] Thus the reader of Augustine must first recognize himself as an interlocutor with Augustine, and more primarily as interlocuted by God alongside Augustine: the distinctive nature of the *Confessions* as 'a text, *par excellence,* to-God [*á-Dieu*]' forms 'an extraordinary rupture with the metaphysical mode of speech'[117] when this latter is understood as predicating (in the etymological sense) something of God, inscribing God under an allegedly *pre* -existent concept or category. In this way, when Marion argues that there is a fundamental difference between speaking to God and speaking of God, such that 'to speak *of* God signifies, in the end, speaking *of* him, but *without,* even *against* him',[118] this prepositional playing is not simply a tired reiteration of the speculative difference between theo-*logy* and *theo*-logy, but a reorientation of this formulation in the opening terms of the *Confessions*, with the result that the reader is allowed to interpret the enigmatic *ministerium*

[115] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 32-3.
[116] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 36-7.
[117] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 39.
[118] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 38.

praedicatoris in a similarly etymological fashion: neither as referring to Ambrose, nor to a mystical 'inward' Christ (as in Courcelle[119]), but to a phenomenological structuring of creation as such, which is nevertheless tenaciously Christological, the ministry of that which is spoken before (*prae-dicere*) us.

Marion thus construes the *confessio* as a phenomenological structure which comes from a strictly theological claim; the remainder of the first chapter describes how this structure 'arouses, organizes and unifies' the *Confessions*.[120] The 'arousal' which this structure effects on the *Confessions* refers, in the first instance, to the prominent and determining role that the quotation of Scripture plays in its pages. This has long been noted and is a commonplace within Augustinian studies, but Marion is to my knowledge the only phenomenological reader of Augustine to point it out. Further, his analysis is, rather remarkably for a phenomenologist, quick to tie the observation of this fact to the Augustinian teaching of verbal creation: that Augustine so frequently quotes the Bible indicates that 'it is not a matter of words said *by* St. Augustine, but first said *to* St. Augustine by the very one *to* whom the confession now *re*peats them -- words said right away by God who has said the word first, or rather who has said the first word, as he has created the world by it'.[121] Praise therefore structures not only language, but

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119 Pierre Courcelle: *Recherches sur les Confessions de Saint Augustin.* Paris: de Boccard, 1950.

120 Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 70.

121 Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 42.

the creation of the world via this language; to praise is to pay attention, and to pay attention to praise is to learn that to which praise responds. In this sense, for Marion, again showing the clear influence of Chrétien, phenomenology takes on a decidedly antiphonal character:

> That which I say and that which I wish to say (my intentionality) are up to me, but *that* I say them and *how* I say them (my syntax and my performance) come to me from another … The *confessio* has no function but to apprehend, little by little, that from which speech has come, without knowing, as a response.[122]

In other words, the practice of the *confessio*, as a perpetual response, formally mirrors the 'late have I loved you' which Augustine will later offer to a beauty which is 'as ancient as it is new,' although he has not yet established that *pulchritudo* as a plausible content to fill this form; for the moment, and primarily, as Marion contends, this form arises out of the logic of quoting Scripture – despite or because of the fact that, as Augustine tells, one cannot quote Scripture without learning an 'apostolic hermeneutic,' and one which moreover participates in the missions of the Trinity.[123] In applying the logic of *Confessions* X.2.2 ("I do not say anything right to men, which you have not *previously* heard from me, nor do You hear anything from me which *you have not previously said to me*")[124] to Augustine's speech as a whole, Marion convincingly argues that this logic precedes 'the self' and renders it possible.

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[122] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 43.
[123] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 44.
[124] For the remainder of this chapter, any English quotations of Augustine are my own translations of Marion's French translations, although I have taken efforts to check these against both the Latin version edited by O'Donnell and whatever English translations I had at hand – in the case of the Confessions, Chadwick; in the case of the City of God, Dyson; On the Trinity, Hill. I have taken care, though it pains me typographically and aesthetically, to reproduce Marion's wild italicizings.

Further, he makes no effort to conceal the language of being Augustine uses in the passage most relevant to this antiphonal voice: "You came *before* me before I called to you. With mounting frequency, by voices of many kinds, you put pressure on me, so that from far off I heard and was converted and called upon you as you were calling to me … in any good actions of mine *you were before me* … *Before* I was, you were, and I had no being to which you could grant existence. Nevertheless here I am as a result of your goodness, which *pre*cedes all that you made me to me, and all out of which you made me."[125] (XIII.1.1). This passage, which Marion reads as supporting in advance his doctrine of the gifted (*l'adonnê*), nevertheless shifts the radicality of this doctrine from that of the subject (which *L'Étant Donné*, despite Marion's objections to the contrary, indeed tends towards) into that of an economy of creation: 'As the gifted, I must all the same receive myself in the same time that I give what I receive, because I do not precede them, but come, exactly like them, from an immemorial instance.'[126] He illustrates this reception and donation of the self with reference to the Milan conversion narrative, in that Augustine does not have at his disposal, at the moment of conversion, a self, let alone words to express that self, but only the words of the psalms.[127] To quote Scripture, as the anterior call of the triune God mediated through ecclesial interpretation, is the 'most intimate response' my confession can make.[128] In this way the structure of the *confessio*, particularly construed as

[125] Augustine, *Conf.* XIII.1.1.
[126] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 47.
[127] Augustine, *Conf.* VIII.12.28.
[128] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 49.

that which listens carefully to the language of the Bible and appropriates it as its own most appropriate and most personal, indeed as that which underwrites its being, initiates the text of the *Confessions*, which already begins to emerge as more dialogue than text.

Marion correctly but insufficiently recognizes the ontological weight of *confessio*

Marion's argument regarding the organization of the *Confessions* by the principle of the *confessio* similarly problematizes any facile distinction between the linguistic and the ontological, as well as any simply disjunctive reading of the *confessio laudis* and the *confessio peccati*. After an impressive survey of the texts (largely from the *Ennarrationes in psalmos*) in which Augustine discusses the act of confession, Marion argues that Augustine's treatment of confession marks an important departure from his predecessors, whether Christian (Tertullian) or pagan (Cicero, Ps.-Quintilian), for all of whom confession (*exomologesis*) is primarily (in the case of Tertullian) or exclusively (in the case of Cicero and Ps.-Quintilian) of fault, and thus 'against the self.' For Augustine, on the contrary, confession of praise is equal to confession of finitude, which is similar but prior to confession of sin: 'I can only praise God as God, if I name him as such, but I can only name him as such, if I deny myself this same name.'[129] Further still, as Marion glosses on

[129] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 56.

Augustine's suggestively ontological phrase, *sine confessione tamen non simus*:[130] 'For I do not say my confession, I am my confession; I do not say it because I am it; and I am not really, unless I confess.'[131] So radical to the *Confessions* is this logic that, as Marion displays with a note of tedium, nearly every book begins or ends with an explicit confession, and, as he goes on to argue, there is a discernible arc of these confessions from the individual to the communal or ecclesial,[132] to (finally, at the end of Book XIII) the universal confession of 'all your [God's] works.'[133] In so defending the structural integrity of the *Confessions* against unnamed literary critics on the one hand, and on the other against the 'theologians, philosophers and historians' who mine them for utilizable fragments but ignore the confessions of praise as 'a literary ornament or a pious convention,'[134] Marion contends quite rightly that they take not only their name, but also their logic and trajectory, opening from the personal onto the Scriptural, liturgical and universal (we could add, as Marion does not, ontological) structure of the *confessio*. Since it sets the scene for much of the exegesis of the *Confessions* which *Au Lieu De Soi* comprises, it is worthwhile to linger briefly over the way in which these structures overlap: it is not in the institution of a *soi*, even liturgically, even in the cosmic liturgy, but in the decentering [*décentrement*] of the self, 'always partial and thus always to be taken up again.'[135] The unity which arises between Augustine as a

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130 Augustine, *Ennarrationes in Psalmos* 29.4.
131 Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 54.
132 Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 60.
133 Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 63.
134 Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 64.
135 Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 75.

subject (*Conf.* I-IX), his readers as a hermeneutic and ecclesial community (X), and all creation insofar as it is temporal (XI-XIII) is thus not exactly that of concentric circles, but the unity of spheres decentered in their perpetual and constitutive response *to* God, who, as *interior intimo meo* (which will become in its repetition, an increasingly emphasized phrase throughout *Au Lieu De Soi*, rivaled only perhaps by the *quaestio mihi*), is read as the center which establishes, delimits and structures them. In this way Marion argues for not only the first nine books, but the entirety of the *Confessions*, as precisely not autobiography but '*hetero* -biography,' the self said by God, who alone knows it. God, closer to me than my interior, but also closer to other people than their interiors, therefore marks 'the third,' an essential 'detour' and 'mediation' between me and them.[136] That Marion's example, that Monica's prayers to God on Augustine's behalf are efficacious where her 'direct' interventions are not, marginalizes the mediation of Ambrose and thus neglects the reciprocality of this principle (that others, and particularly bishops, serve likewise as a mediation for the self to God, even if this mediation is a response to the more primary mediation) need not distract from Marion's broader point: that 'St. Augustine anticipates the phenomenological doctrine of the third person, from then on allowed, *but only in order to inverse it immediately*':[137] this is the first instance wherein Marion establishes Augustine as an ultimate, if distant and perhaps indirect, founder of phenomenology, but rather than submitting Augustine to a straitjacket of

[136] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 80.
[137] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 81, emphasis mine.

phenomenological dogmatics, allows Augustine to unseat and supplant this dogmatics theologically. Thus, in an exceptionally important footnote, Marion compares this transcendent (not transcendental!) third, as a 'guarantee of intersubjectivity' to the 'mundane' thirds of Husserl (the world), Sartre (the *groupe en fusion*), Merleau-Ponty (the flesh), Henry (life), and even Levinas (for whom the third remains always 'anonymous and without determination').[138] The resulting paradox, that the most interior to the *ego* is also the most *alter* to the *ego*, gestures towards a phenomenology radicalized in Augustinian fashion, which Marion appears to be willing, at this early moment in the book, to permit to challenge 20th century phenomenological orthodoxies. And if he does not entirely follow through on this impulse, in ways which I will suggest later, still this opening methodological chapter at least gestures in a valuable direction. This chapter's closing line, which equates the model of the *confessio* to an 'erotic reduction,' which allows access to love of others and love of God, in lieu of suggesting that Marion is interested in Augustine only to shore up the views he has arrived at independently of Augustine,[139] actually invites an Augustinian critique of Marion's previous work, and a revisioning of the erotic reduction in the light of the Augustinian confession.

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[138] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 81 n.2.

[139] Notably, Augustine is absent from *The Erotic Phenomenon*, save the epigram: *Nemo est qui non amet*.

Marion strikes down the Husserlian self-sufficient subject as fundamentally Cartesian, rather than Augustinian

The drive to decenter the subject theologically, by the structure of the *confessio*, is in continuity with Marion's previous historical work on Descartes and Augustine,[140] which has cast salutary doubt on any assumed uninterrupted tradition of a *cogito* with Augustinian roots, and indeed foreshadows the defense of this position which begins the next chapter, *L'ego ou l'adonné,* Marion's most sustained and convincing textual analysis of this question to date. He sets up this discussion by reframing the question of the *cogito* in terms of 'access of the self to itself': as Descartes thinks he has found such an access in *cogitatio*, so Augustine is supposed to have found it in a quasi-epistemological reading of the *imago dei*. Though this simplistic conflation might seem to have an air of the straw man about it, Marion reminds us that such was precisely the response of Arnauld in Descartes' own time![141] Nevertheless it is easily corrected: as texts from *De civitate dei* to *De trinitate*, but especially *De beata vita* and the *Enchiridion* show, Augustine's formulation, though formally similar to the *cogito*, replaces 'being' with 'life.' A more insidious danger than a simple and historical conflation might here insinuate itself: namely, to read *life* in such a formulation as something primarily possessed, something at my disposition. Much like the treatment of language in the first chapter, Marion's defense against such a misreading

[140] See in particular *Questions cartésiennes*, *II, Sur l'ego et sur Dieu* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1997), especially pp. 37ff.

[141] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 93.

of Augustine aims primarily to decenter or 'disappropriate' the self from the self: 'Nothing lives by itself ... Only the Living par excellence lives of itself.'[142] The conscious echo of Henry, whose phenomenology of life is very nearly Barthian, does not preclude Marion from describing something very like participation: "'to live" means "to live provisionally," because, more essentially, by procuration.'[143] But with or without an explicit account of the participation by which I live, Marion points out that Blondel, Heidegger and indeed Descartes himself recognize, to different extents, that the Cartesian *cogito* represents a development, if not an outright betrayal, of the Augustinian tradition, both in its execution and indeed in its very aim: Augustine at no point attempts 'to assure the ego of its existence, nor to assign to it *cogitatio* as its essence.'[144]

This aggressive strike against *cogitatio* ought to be uncontroversial by now, particularly in phenomenological circles. More controversial might be the attack on the (transcendental) subject itself: 'St Augustine perfectly allows the argument which links thought to being, he even inaugurates it and will impose it on his posterity (including Descartes); but he denies to this same argument the ability to produce and consecrate my ego known by itself … The ego is missing from St Augustine, at least in the Cartesian sense of "*ego ille, quem novi*" since it does not know it except as a question, and a question on an unknown essence: "What am I, and of what sort am I?"'[145]

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[142] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 96.
[143] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 95.
[144] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 98.
[145] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 99-100. Cf. Augustine, *Conf.* IX.1.1.

Such a questioning, at the root of the self, Marion follows Augustine in terming an *exile*, in biblical terms, or in rhetorical terms a *monstrum*. Crucially, as Marion points out, both invocations of the self as *quaestio mihi* arise in liturgical contexts: in the first case,[146] in grief at the death of a friend (but more radically due to the separation from that friend which occurred in his baptism), and in the second case[147] in fear that he enjoys liturgical music more than its object. In both cases, it is a matter of the self *not* having at its disposal the greater liturgical life which provokes it to question itself radically, or more accurately to recognize that its self has always been in question. The liturgical mysteries (and this word is well-advised) teaches against the law of non-contradiction: 'Right away, A *is not* A, *I* am not *me*':[148] and this is a mark not merely of sin or death, but of finitude, since it is manifest both before Augustine's conversion and after, in prayer. While the ego exists, and knows that it exists, it knows this precisely as a problem, a closure of itself to itself, an inaccessibility.

Marion overstates the dark side of *memoria* in order to point toward desire as the central mode of Augustinian phenomenology

Whence comes, for Marion, the Augustinian *memoria*, not as a solution to this problem, but as an intensification of it. *Memoria*, which more than a faculty or a disposition is the very constitution of the ego.[149] As such,

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[146] Augustine, *Conf.* IV.4.9.
[147] Augustine, *Conf.* X.33.50.
[148] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 103.
[149] Cf. Augustine, *Conf.* X.14.21, X.16.25.

rather than 'compensating for the impossibility of a *cogitatio sui* in returning an access for the ego to itself, to the self … [*memoria*] not only gives the *ego* no access to itself, it renders decisively manifest the impossibility of a principle for such access.'[150] This is so because *memoria* is decidedly not relegated, for Augustine, to the representation and reproduction of past objects as images (although Augustine theorizes this function more clearly and more comprehensively than his predecessors or followers), but instead composes and organizes these images, theoretical knowledges, and finally the *mens* itself. Augustine subordinates *cogitatio* to *memoria*, rather than the other way round, such that '*memoria* alone assures the unity of [the mind's] flux by temporalizing it.'[151] *Memoria* is self-excessive, and thus paradoxical, the fitting 'place of that which has no place, the place of all thoughts which are not of the world';[152] this paradox, *hoc monstrum*, is particularly appropriate when it comes to the ultimate paradox of *memoria* of the self, the collecting of the self both in memory (as crudely understood, referring to the past) and as anticipation or desire. While avoiding the term *anamnesis*, Marion clearly evokes the concept in his reference to *De trinitate* X.3.5: 'Unless the mind sees its best end, that is its own security and beatitude, *by a certain hidden memory*, which is not abandoned when it is lost from far away' (emphasis mine). He summarizes this 'new figure' of the self's *quaestio* to itself in explicitly ontological terms: 'that which I am ignorant of [sc. my existence],

[150] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 109.
[151] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 112.
[152] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 113.

my *quaedam memoria occulta*, at the same time preserves it for me and hides it from me. And, since I am my *memoria*, I thus become hidden from myself.'[153]

Memoria moreover deepens and broadens the 'essential ambivalence' of the self's lack of access to itself by 'rendering absence present, but also keeping absence absent';[154] it both serves to call past things to mind, but also to call to mind the very fact of recalling: which is nowhere as clear as in Augustine's discussion of the paradox of remembering that one has forgotten something, but cannot remember what that something is.[155] This is a paradox far from a simple illogicality or a banal thought experiment: it discloses the self to itself in its very inaccessibility, and confounds in advance the 'presence of the self to thought' on which 'metaphysics'[156] relies. More radically still, Augustine considers the case wherein one forgets even that one has forgotten, which, perhaps relying too heavily here on the account of Levinas, Marion sees as central and as indicating the ultimate presence in the *memoria* of that which, more than even the self and its experience, exceeds *memoria*: namely the 'immemorial.' In this event, which Marion without much textual justification takes as constitutive of the *memoria*, the action 'no longer concerns that which was present to my mind in the past and could become so again in the future -- in the literal sense, the representable as re-*presentable* -- but that which in me remains inaccessible to me, and uncontrollable.'[157] It

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153 Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 114.
154 Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 115.
155 Augustine, *Conf.* X.16.24ff.
156 Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 119. Again, no names are named: is it perhaps permissible in this context to read 'metaphysics' as a nickname for Descartes?
157 Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 121.

is not necessary, in order to agree with Marion's argument that *memoria* 'repeats and culminates' the aporia which the self is to itself, to share in this bizarre privileging of what is for Augustine merely a black hole for inquiry, and what is certainly a dead end in the quest for the *vita beata* which he will rightly emphasize next as the most proper aim for these aporias of anamnesis. Though he here veers precariously towards letting 20th century phenomenology set Augustine's agenda, he quickly reminds himself that *memoria*, even if it has a cognitive function which is most sharply displayed in the purely formal forgetting of forgetting, nevertheless is more primarily determined by the will, by the self-transcendence of *memoria* by its function of desiring, rather than its self-negation, as in the vision at Ostia.[158] This desire, manifested first and ultimately for the happy life, whilst 'without object, worldless and utopian,'[159] nevertheless can be given more content than its purely formal counterpoints: specifically, he is constrained by the Augustinian text to give it at least as much content as *gaudium in veritate*, 'joy and enjoyment' as the 'sensible index of the truth, because here the truth no longer offers only information to know, but is opened as a territory to be entered into … the truth here in question is given to be known, but above all to be inhabited … [as] the ground of life.'[160] Marion does not, as Heidegger does, reject *veritas* in this formulation as 'metaphysical.' In fact it retains a fundamentally personal, though not Christological character: the radical eudaimonism implied in the universal desire for 'joy in the truth'

[158] Augustine, *Conf.* IX.10.25.
[159] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 126.
[160] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 140.

paradoxically 'individualizes' and 'identifies' me as me.[161] The particular mode or way in which the desire for the *vita beata* shows itself in me simply *is* me. But this is only true so long as I travel along this way, this 'distance of *the self in place of the self*.'[162] How? Marion leaves the answer to this question more or less indeterminate, but he does vitally resolve that such a traveling will be first of all trinitarian: 'only God makes one with the truth, but this truth is reciprocated with charity (and eternity): "O eternal truth, and true beauty, and charitable eternity!"'[163] As is to be expected, Marion ignores the Platonic and entirely metaphysical context of this exclamation.

Marion pushes his conception of desire towards universality, while stopping short of ascribing it to being itself

Although Marion allows (and this is a departure, however begrudging) this traveling to have a theoretical element, this remains only a 'quasi-knowledge' of the desire for the *vita beata* which is a knowledge 'without comprehension and without representation, literally just enough for desiring it.'[164] Both in the knowledge and in the desire, as unconditioned, Marion argues that there is an intrinsic logic to the (happy) life that supplants and outstrips the *cogito* in advance:

> Life (just because I do not possess it, but receive it from elsewhere) is given only on the condition that I receive it at each instant … Being gives nothing but being (because it

[161] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 127.
[162] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 142.
[163] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 140. Cf. Augustine, *Conf.* VII.10.16,
[164] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 136-7.

> does not in fact give it), while life gives nothing but life, thus gives the happy life (because it cannot but give itself). When life is substituted for being, it is thus already a matter of beatitude, intrinsic to desire and thus ignored by being, which neither desires nor can be desired.[165]

While Marion cannot justify this outright equivocity between life and being on Augustinian grounds, with his polemic against Descartes (or at least against a caricature of Descartes) he hits on the central point of Augustinian desire: that desire is itself received. Such a stance draws on one of Augustine's most cited biblical texts ('What do you have that you did not receive?', 1 Cor. 4.7) and must color our interpretation of the logic of desire generally, and particularly the desire for joy in the truth. Since I am 'no longer essentially who I am, but what I love,'[166] a voluntary ontology which accords well with the anthropology of the *interior intimo meo*, any Cartesian or Husserlian reading of desire and of interiority is to be eschewed: not only is 'the better the more interior,'[167] but 'the more interior is charity,' which is already oriented to actually existing others.[168] The journey into the self is simultaneously a reception of that self, and more fundamentally an entering into an economy of charity which is at once participatory ('by participation in God is it [sc., the soul] made happy'[169]) – although Marion neither emphasizes (as one should) nor qualifies (as one might expect) the key metaphysical word *participatione* – and universal ('he is more interior to everything, because all things are in him, and more exterior to everything,

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165 Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 130.
166 Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 144.
167 Augustine, *Conf.* X.6.9.
168 Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 142-3, citing Augustine, *In epistolam ioannis* 8.9.
169 Augustine, *In epistolam ioannis* 23.5.

because he is over them all'[170]).In this last dimension, by invoking the Christological *seminales rationes* of *De genesi ad litteram*, the seeds by which God is present as the most interior place of all things, Marion gestures towards the next chapter, in which he submits his motif (until now allegedly pure in its phenomenological rigor) of the saturated phenomenon, that which is 'most secret and most present' (*secretissimus et praesentissimus*)[171] to a cosmic and ultimately theological reconfiguration, after which *l'adonné* appears – in its original giftedness and in its ultimate desire for the *vita beata*, both of which surpass and include *memoria* (as memory, as sensation or as self-consciousness) – as fundamentally a lover, participating in a cosmic exchange.

In elaborating a personal and subjectivized account of *veritas*, Marion offers a Platonic ontology which he yet refuses to recognize as such

Having explained the connection between the *vita beata* and love, Marion next considers love (or enjoyment, or desire to enjoy) specifically as a mode of relating to the *truth*, in the third chapter, *La vérité ou le phénomène saturé*. Or perhaps more accurately, he outlines an account of truth which is made possible by such a privileging of love: if the desire for the happy life is the desire to enjoy God, it must be simultaneously the desire to enjoy the true God, thus the desire to enjoy truth itself (a rather analytically retiring way of arriving at the Augustinian formulation of *gaudium in veritate*): but

[170] Augustine, *De genesi ad litteram* 8.26.28.
[171] Augustine, *Conf.* I.4.4.

what sort of truth presupposes *gaudium* as its mode of access? He begins his consideration with a predictable objection raised by Heidegger: 'if the truth governs the desire for the happy life … how can we avoid the result that desire passes under the control of theory, which would then control even ethics and the will?'[172] . In other words, so long as eternal life remains characterized primarily by knowledge of the truth (*cognitia veritatis*), Augustine remains unable to think the truth (as Heidegger supposes he wishes to do) beyond the Greek impulse of a cold and neutral *theoria.* Marion perhaps follows Heidegger too closely in assuming that such an impulse ever existed among the Greeks: nevertheless, his attempt to defend Augustine from the charge of an inability to search radically for the phenomenalization of truth finds him ready to qualify or indeed reject the caricature of Augustine presented by Heidegger, if not more thoroughly to qualify or reject the caricature of the Greeks which it presupposes. His tactic is to show that, despite the undeniable existence of texts which show knowledge as a mode of relating to the truth, truth gives itself more radically and more exhaustively 'to be desired than to be known' – in fact, desire is *infinitely* more appropriate than (theoretical) knowledge as a mode of relating to the truth.[173] This account rests heavily upon the insistence, from *Dieu sans l'être* onward, that God is not 'one being among others'. Though by no means is this a novel point from Marion's pen, nevertheless his resolve that it be related to an anamnetic desire which must in some sense precede knowledge of what it

[172] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 150.
[173] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 153.

desires clarifies this point, and renders it more obviously Augustinian, and also, incidentally (and contrary perhaps to his avowed intention), more deeply Platonic. He quite rightly notes that this principle of a love which precedes and engenders knowledge is, incipiently in the *Confessions* and explicitly in *De trinitate*, a 'reciprocal immanence' which is 'nothing less than an image of the Trinity itself.'[174]

The truth that both bears, and is borne out of, such a reciprocality is obviously 'non-theoretical,' at least in the cold neutrality which both Heidegger and Marion assign to *theoria*: Marion's project in this chapter is to delineate a phenomenology of such a truth not as a Heideggerean refusal of the theoretical, but as supra-theoretical, an excess of truth over what noetic contemplation can bear to suffer. His emphasis is thus largely on the 'choice' which the truth 'imposes' on the one who undergoes it: not a choice of judgment, of determining whether something is true or false, but a choice of accepting or rejecting the truth which is given, or, when translated into the more provocative Augustinian lexicon, of loving or hating the truth. Heavy accent is given, in Marion's account, to the rather marginal distinction between two modes of the truth in *Conf.* X.23.34: the (loved) truth that illuminates (*veritas lucens*) and the (hated, at least at first) truth that accuses (*veritas redarguens*). Of these two modes of truth – and Marion is unrelentingly resolute in maintaining that *lucens* and *redarguens* are but two modes of the same and divine truth – in keeping with the Augustinian doctrine of the truth as *illuminatio*, the *lucens* is primary, such that truth 'embraces everything,

[174] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 156.

imperially and irresistably'[175] and even the 'accusing' truth is understood in an optical rather than an ethical metaphor, 'where the light "accuses" the relief and the traits of that which it strikes: the divine light neither persecutes nor blames, but is confined to being given off.'[176] This 'giving off' [Latin *fulgere*, French *se répandre* : more daringly rendered *emanation*], as Heidegger already saw, 'sets in question my own facticity and existence'[177] and renders evident all my traits, indeed myself, here as a sinner, which is why Marion's analysis, following Augustine's, begins with hatred of this light, out of a misplaced love of the self. The Augustinian nexus of truth and love emerges, chronologically and phenomenologically, first of all out of this hatred, which is nevertheless ontologically subordinate to love, such that even this hatred of the truth arises from love of the self, and eventually can lead to the greater love of truth: 'In brief, in order not to hate the light, one must love it more than one's self, at least more than the self whose traits the light accuses.'[178] Part of what Marion means by 'non-theoretical' emerges in his rejection of a rather more banal understanding of hatred of the truth, that 'the truth engenders hatred,'[179] which in context is merely the observation that since some truths are difficult to hear, the messenger who bears such a truth does prudently to distance himself from that message. This formulation falls short of the radicality of Augustine's, since Augustine draws more directly on the

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[175] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 160.
[176] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 162.
[177] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 162. Cf. Heidegger, "Augustine and Neo-Platonism," 151.
[178] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 163.
[179] Augustine, *Conf.* X.23.34.

Johannine formulation in which the truth which is hated (and eventually killed) sustains no difference with its messenger: 'Hatred … of the truth can only be addressed to him who claims to incarnate the truth: this thus proves to be epistemologically Christological, thus theological: for he alone can inform me and himself constitute the informing, verify and say what verifies.'[180] The following phenomenology of hatred of the truth, of the truth's unbearable excess of obviousness, the hater's initial refusal to bear it, his pleasure in retreating to his habitual sin and ignorance, and finally his arrival at a choice to remain what he is or to undergo the process of confessing, turning toward the truth and becoming converted in love to a love of that truth, adamantly casts these familiar terms in phenomenological rather than moralizing terms, but this phenomenological re-casting of Augustine more radically submits the process of phenomenology to an Augustinian, a Johannine and ultimately a Christian account of the truth as loved, which, far from being sentimentalized, is the 'ordeal … of "participation in the highest light".'[181] Indeed it is this ordeal of participation, in other words the pain of imitating, growing into and becoming the truth which one loves, in which even the hater of the truth participates, albeit in a perverse mode: '[Hatred] no longer here concerns the will to imitate God (it is *always* a matter of becoming as God) but of the mode of this imitation: whether because God gives it to me, or because I have acquired it by and for

[180] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 166.
[181] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 174-5. Cf. Augustine, *De trinitate*, 14.12.15.

myself.'[182] Such a purported acquisition is, at its root, the desire to remain as one is, or in other words to acquire and possess the self: it is a denial of God and of reciprocality as the *interior intimo meo*, even as it 'witnesses again and radically to an inverse love of the truth' which more fundamentally underlies it.[183] The exchange (at root Trinitarian) which underlies this anthropology, that of *caritas*, therefore has an epistemological function: whence Augustine's reflections on Scripture and the rigorous rule of charity in *Conf.* XII. The phenomenology of hatred and thus of love for the truth (*Conf.* X) leads Augustine to an account of truth which essentially participates in and accomplishes an exchange – universal and communal – which 'gathers in mutual love those who commune in the same love of the truth -- always *theirs*, although *or because* each does not claim to possess his own.'[184]

Marion argues that an Augustinian account of the gift outstrips both Husserlian and Heideggerean subjectivity

To demonstrate the implications of this truth as loved and exchanged, Marion here takes an historical detour, considering its surpassing of two schools of its heirs: herein is one of *Au Lieu De Soi*'s most explicit repositionings of phenomenology in Augustinian terms. The first of these, which begins with the Thomist conception of truth as *adequaetio rei et intellectu* and is repeated in different terms by Descartes, Kant and Husserl, Marion diagnoses as a reversal of Augustine: 'The truth does not lead so much to

[182] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 176.
[183] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 180.
[184] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 182.

the thing itself as much as it leads to the knowing mind, which has the power to make it by saying it. More than an aporia, it is here a matter of a transcendental condition: I make the truth, by making possible the adequation between the conception and the thing, that is to say by judging; and thus, since I judge it, I make the truth by instituting myself at a distance from it.'[185] To this is opposed Heidegger, who reverses the reversal: instead of an epistemic or noetic adequation, truth is phenomenalization, 'without coming from a synthesis or a constitution, uniquely from itself':[186] but even Heidegger 'presupposes me as Dasein' to decide it. This critique is well known, and appears in Marion as early as *Réduction et donation*:[187] but here, in advancing a specifically Augustinian account of truth as gift, which, in a precise opposite to the models of adequation and phenomenalization,[188] makes *me* and decides *me*, judges my adequation and adequacy, Marion both makes a more convincing case than he has previously made for the inadequacy of the 20th century phenomenological models, and very correctly resituates Augustine within a complex portrait of the truth that has 'too high

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185 Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 184-5.
186 Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 185.
187 Jean-Luc Marion, *Reduction and Givenness: Investigations of Husserl, Heidegger and Phenomenology*, trans. Thomas A. Carlson. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1998.
188 From an Augustinian perspective, it is not terribly important that these models be accurate portrayals of their respective figures (particularly the critiques of Aquinas and Heidegger are likely to be criticized on these grounds) – since Marion is simply using these to establish, *a contrario*, the Augustinian account which they have allegedly misread: I at least see no reason to deny Aquinas in particular the catholicity of the truth as love and as loved.

a tension' for created finitude, and 'reverberates' with such a strength that only love can sustain it.[189]

Marion artificially separates "Being" from phenomenological dynamism, which obscures Augustine's continuity with neo-Platonism

All of the foregoing, however, is mere prelude to Marion's next move: just as the final step of the first chapter is to translate *confessio* as 'la réduction,' and that of the second chapter to translate *ego* as 'l'adonné,' so in this third chapter *veritas*, transposed into *pulchritudo*, is finally translated as 'le phénomène saturé.' Of the three, this translation is the most daring, and risks the most hubristic misreading, due both to the originality and the peculiarity of the French term to Marion's own thought, and to the initial shift in even the Latin. For Marion has admirably shown that *veritas* is, as loved, *pulcher*: but is it, for all that, *pulchritudo* itself? To answer this, he appeals to two important passages for any treatment of 'an Augustinian philosophy' -- the first, from *Confessions*: "I should have *transgressed* the philosophers, *even when they spoke truly*, in favor of your love, my supremely good Father, *beauty of all beauties*. O truth, truth …";[190] the second, from *Contra academicos*:

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[189] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 188. Although Marion for obvious reasons wants to affirm some degree of uniqueness to Augustine's account, he acknowledges others who have approached such an 'erotic' account of love. The list is surprising in its inclusions (Pascal, with some Heideggerean reserve, is to be expected, but Nietzsche and Levinas are slightly more counterintuitive members of such a group) and its exclusions (only a Heideggerean hellenosceptic could have neglected to mention Plato's *Symposium* in this regard).

[190] Augustine, *Conf.* III.6.10.

> It is commonly called '*Philocalia*'. Do not contemn this name from its common usage, for philocalia and philosophy are nearly named the same thing, and it is as if they seem to be of the same family - and they are. For what is philosophy? The love of wisdom. What is *philocalia*? The love of beauty. Ask the Greeks. What, therefore, is wisdom? Is it not, in truth, beauty? The two are sisters, engendered of one parent.[191]

In both of these, the essential convertibility of wisdom and beauty is confirmed precisely by love, or at least friendship, which must be more original than either, both as a phenomenon and as a proper name for God. In a final confirmation of this model by the original model of the *confessio*, Marion claims that to confess sin is also inevitably but not simultaneously 'to confess beauty,' and that the delay between these confessions is that referred to in Augustine's famous exclamation, '*Late* have I loved you': he reads this apostrophe to *pulchritudo* as a 'seduction in the strictest and most direct sense,' in which 'beauty makes a step towards me which I cannot make toward it.' It is of the utmost importance for Marion to read this 'seduction' against any tradition which would read it as an 'allegory' or indeed even employ the misleading term 'spiritual senses': 'It is indeed a matter of the five physical senses, not a spiritual allegory, because the sensible senses exercise right away a spiritual function.'[192] It is difficult to imagine such a reading without the influence of Merleau-Ponty and Henry, yet the passage itself is essentially theological, and as such is more radical than the 'auto'-affection of the flesh: it is, infelicitously but inevitably, a *theo*-affection, which is for all that no less well and truly *of* the flesh. Correspondingly, *philocalia*

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[191] Augustine, *Contra academicos,* 2.37.
[192] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 199.

supplants a philosophy which would treat 'aesthetics' as a sub-discipline: 'beauty thus does not define a particular domain of philosophy … it rather assures the world in its totality and thus first of all its erotic reduction, where the truth can be known insofar as it is loved.'[193] Marion supplies an unnecessary and misleading correlative to these claims when he adds that 'Beauty does not play the role of a simple transcendental, which one could derive from Being … because it does not concern the horizon of Being, but the question of love.'[194] One might have hoped for a more inclusive and imaginative treatment of being, since it is not at all clear that Augustine's language regarding being[195] proscribe the sort of dynamism and reciprocality which Marion rightly finds in his language regarding beauty and wisdom. A scholastic or Aristotelian enumeration of different kinds of being is simply not one of Augustine's major concerns, in either a positive or a negative fashion, so Marion's eisegesis here is as disappointing as any purported 'neo-Scholastic' desire (on the part of Gilson, for example) to 'find' such an enumeration in Augustine. In any event, the logic of this dynamism is certainly more easily perceived in the case of love than in the others: since in love, one necessarily enters into an economy which is at once compromise and fulfilment: 'In what way will we become beautiful? *By loving* him who is always beautiful. As much as love increases in you, so much does beauty increase, because love itself is the beauty of the soul."[196] In this economy, the

[193] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 202.
[194] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 197.
[195] Especially his own existence: cf. Augustine, *Conf.* VII.10.16.
[196] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 203, citing *In epistolam ioannis* 9.9.

difficulty of entering into which forms the next chapter's meditation, something very like a theological Platonism (again, contrary to his avowed intentions) emerges: 'Things only appear beautiful in the absolute beauty as they are shown to by true only in the absolute truth'[197] – a dynamic of the phenomenon, saturated by 'the absolute,' which nonetheless is rigorously Scriptural (as Marion's allusion to Genesis 1.31 'very good' confirms, gesturing towards his culminating chapter on creation).

Marion's central critique of Heidegger is expressed in Christological terms, but resists commitment to a fully theological ontology

Between beauty and the self, as finite and as fallen, love must mediate, and it must do so in a particular approach: namely that of *conversio*. For this reason, although Marion's first three chapters have been dedicated to establishing the aims of *confessio*, the ego, truth and beauty, all of these are underwritten by the dynamic of conversion, whose description in the next chapter, *La faiblesse de la volonté ou la puissance de l'amour,* therefore forms precisely a fulcrum for the entirety of *Au Lieu De Soi,* its structural and logical center. In this respect it is intended to parallel Book X of the *Confessions*, as the book in which 'the ego topples over [*bascule*] into Scripture, and the singular into the plural.'[198] To these two progressions we may perhaps add a third, implicit, even reticent, but no less strongly felt: phenomenology itself topples over into ontology, with a discernible, and increasingly critical,

[197] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 203.
[198] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 205.

dialogue with Heidegger setting much of Marion's agenda. This is in at least one respect inevitable: aside from Marion's long-standing debt to Heidegger, which was never without reservation but is appearing to be more and more problematic in Marion's own eyes, it would be unthinkable to engage at any length with the Augustinian conversion, and its attending *tentatio*, without facing Heidegger's reading thereof. Marion takes just as seriously as Heidegger does the refrain of *Confessions* X, taken from Job – 'Is not human life on earth a temptation?'[199] – as an indication that temptation, far from being an accident, even a result of the fall, is constitutive of life as such, as 'permanent' and 'universal' as is the desire for the happy life.[200] In this it is clear that 'temptation' has a different meaning than that of the quotidian understanding as basically identical with sin: another indication of this strangeness is that Augustine treats most substantially of this question *after* what is commonly seen as his conversion, after even his baptism. For Heidegger, this is to be read as a privileging of possibility over actuality: Augustine's concern is for the purely possible temptation, which, 'without having any need to pass into the effectivity of an evil act … asks nothing more than this possibility to be exercised,'[201] such that temptation occurs on a 'purely interior' site. As such, and again with reference to Job, temptation occurs 'not only as the paradoxical occasion of a test of faith, but also a test of the self,' a 'disposition' and a *'habitus*,' more than a choice. In its universal testing, Marion points out, temptation is a mode of phenomenalization,

[199] Job 7.1, cited in *Conf.* X 28.39 and 32.48.
[200] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 209.
[201] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 206.

wherein 'a man is made to see that which would remain, without it, invisible to him: his thoughts, his force, his own *self*, that which is in him, but not shown *to* him' insofar as they are hidden to his knowledge of actualities, but shown only in his desire for possibilities.[202] Temptation regards *zuhandenheit*, not *vorhandenheit*, and indeed discloses the phenomenological priority of such to us.

To this point, Marion follows Heidegger – indeed it would be difficult not to do so, and their common reading of temptation as the experience of the self, particularly in resisting conversion by insistently remaining what one's self is, now, in the present, demonstrates the pivotal role of time in Augustinian thought, even without having cited a word of *Confessions* XI. Whether one terms it facticity or, more faithful to Augustine, mutability,[203] the fundamental and absolutely definitive mode of the *vita humana* for Augustine is without doubt radical possibility. Where Marion begins his departure from Heidegger, however, is at first purely philological: where Heidegger reads the *onus mihi* which Augustine announces he has become as exactly this radical possibility,[204] and eventually, in *Being and Time*, as the burden of Dasein itself, Marion insists that we read this central phrase in its theological and thus, for Augustine, biblical context: without this critical move, 'all of Augustine's inquiry [into the *vita humana*, truth and thus ultimately God] disappears, reduced to a simple instrument for taking up

[202] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 210.
[203] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 211.
[204] Heidegger, "Augustine and Neo-Platonism," 206.

again the question of Being.'[205] The context of this biblical correction of Heidegger's partial reading is the paradox of Matthew 11.30 ('my burden is light'); Augustine's allusion, however, need not be caught in order simply to read the full idea in which he uses the phrase *onus mihi sum* (a signal that Heidegger's misreading is after all more wilful than accidental): the paradox that '*as I am not filled with you*, I am a burden to myself.' For Marion, the riddle raised by this formulation – 'why the fullness of God makes one light, while the fullness of self (in fact, the emptiness of God, thus a void) crushes' – is solved with reference to love. He notes that Augustine, whose interpretations of Matthew 11 are neither hard to find nor difficult to interpret,[206] consistently emphasizes the ease and the lightness with which the *lover* of God fulfils the divine commandment, and opposes this to 'the weight of the self reduced to itself alone,' without any external reference of love from which to suspend such a weight.[207] Common to both situations is the occasion of deciding the manner in which one bears temptation. In place of *Dasein* and its decision to inquire after Being, Marion substitutes the Augustinian definition of humanity as *pertinens ad Christum*, which decides what it will love and how it will love, with a crucial difference: where Heidegger's existential analytic is in the end dependent on knowledge, at least the knowledge of whether and how it exists, Augustine's analytic (if it can be so called) of love depends on a receptivity which is at once unknowing and passive. In other words, Marion's reading of Augustine on resistance to

[205] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 213.
[206] Citing *Enn. in psalmos* 7.10 and 67.18.
[207] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 216.

temptation takes as extremely important, and as 'frontally opposed to Heidegger,' the famous formulation '*Da* quod iubes, *give* what you command': 'Temptation becomes the ordeal of the self where the self learns whether it loves what it has received as a gift, and whether it loves this gift more than any other thing.'[208] Recognition and love of the divine command (and thus of conversion) as a gift is for Marion both originary and ultimate, depending on the desire – and Marion concedes too much to Heidegger by allowing that this desire is unconditioned and immediate – for the *vita beata,* a desire which is itself a gift; temptation arises not as an excessive but as a deficient manifestation of this desire. In this light Marion rehearses briefly the distinction between *uti* and *frui*, played on the stage of 1 John 2.16's triad of concupiscence of the flesh, concupiscence of the eyes (or *curiositas*) and the desire for praise (the *ambitio saeculi*): temptation faces me, in each of these three cases, with the decision 'between loving it for itself or, traversing it, loving who gives it, in being decided between loving the given gift or him who renders it possible.'[209] Marion's novel insight to this familiar triad is that Augustine experiences all three of these cases as surprising disclosures of himself to himself: in the first case, the discussion of Augustine's erotic dreams, he experiences himself as unable to deny the pleasure in the unreality of the dream which he is able to deny in the reality of waking life; in the second, his fascination with theoretical knowledges (whether mathematical or

[208] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 217.
[209] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 218.

theatrical) precisely insofar as they do not concern him;[210] in the third, the most egregious and the most painful, his confusion between the praise of God on account of himself and the praise of himself on his own account, which establishes the logic of temptation most radically: 'In this, I am to myself less known than you.'[211] In three concentric spheres (the interior, the exterior, the intersubjective) Augustine finds himself to know God, the least knowable, more than he knows even himself.

Marion intensifies this Augustinian critique of Heidegger to the same degree to which he intensifies his own development of *tentatio* as leading to a 'strictly erotic horizon': the *Seinsfrage* is nothing but an account of *cura* (here translated as *Sorge* or *le soin*) 'neutralized' and purged of its association with *delectatio* and, more radically, *amor* .[212] Following an intuitive, but no less exegetically rigorous, connection between the will and what delights it, he reads Augustine's formulation in the *Soliloquies* literally: 'I have nothing other than a will,' which discloses to me 'what I am and who I am:'[213] even if this will appears as perverse, in its perversity it does not obscure but in fact reveals my perversity. The radicality of this formulation is seen more clearly in the contrary case: in order to rejoice in the truth, it would suffice that I desire so to do. But the corollary to this doctrine is that it is severely difficult, aporetic even, to desire this. Marion discerns here a proto-

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[210] Although Marion does not note it, this phenomenal description comes from Augustine's own first person experience, related in *Conf.* I.13.21, of weeping over Dido but not taking this weeping as an occasion to discover his own loss of the love of God.
[211] Augustine, *Conf.* X.37.62.
[212] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 222.
[213] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 226.

Nietzschean strand of thought (albeit according to an admittedly idiosyncratic reading of Nietzsche) that 'more original to the truth than itself proves to be the will for the truth in it,'[214] a will which leads to a 'practicing of the truth, a practice which is finally seriously theoretical.'[215] Aside from the surprising concession that there is or could be a 'theory' which transcends the crude univocal determination of 'the theoretical' which Marion has often deployed, this passage is notable for its incipient critique of Heidegger (using Nietzsche as much as Augustine): where Heidegger supplants actuality with possibility, Augustine's locating of the truth as *actually* in desire (even if neither this desire nor its truth is readily accessible to me) demands more rigorously that I decide, between my current possibilities, to desire an actuality. And at this point, Heidegger's guiding assumption suffers a frontal attack from Marion, again citing Heidegger's Augustine against him: no fewer than three times in Book X, Augustine calls upon '*hoc monstrum*,' first described in Book VIII: that 'the soul commands the body and is obeyed immediately; the soul commands itself [to desire the truth, for instance] and is resisted.'[216] Heidegger posits, or rather assumes, exactly that by which Augustine is 'stupefied' – that *Dasein* can definitionally decide on its own possibility, and will itself to want whatever it wants to will.

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[214] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 228.
[215] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 229.
[216] Augustine, *Conf.* VIII.9.21.

Marion's commitment to a radical voluntarism forces him to misread the ontology of creation which he increasingly recognizes as central to the *Confessions*

At this point Marion applies the logic of 'this monstrosity' (or 'paradox,' as Marion rather lamely translates it) as elaborated in Book X to the more personal and more famous account of Augustine's (in-)decision in the Milanese garden (the historical or literary character of which we are mercifully allowed, from a phenomenological or a theological perspective, to ignore). In the account from Augustine's own life, an account which Marion deems 'metaphysical' is strenuously disputed: namely that the will is subordinated to the understanding, such that what I know to be the good is easily, or even automatically, by virtue of this knowledge, willed. In the case of Milan, Augustine's tears come from his inability to submit to this account: he knows very well the truth, and understands its superiority to his present life, and despite (or, as Marion suggests without much explanation, even *because* of) this knowledge, he cannot will himself to will it, thus cannot will it. This is of course akin to the 'hatred of the truth' discussed above: 'Thus it is that they hate the truth, on account of that thing, which they love in place of the truth.'[217] Rather than reading this in its intuitive senses – that Augustine's obstinate refusal, or more accurately his delay, to convert even to that which he knows is superior and will assure him the happier life which he desires and knows himself to desire, is due to a simple weakness of the will, or out of a fear that he has misled himself and thus risks losing what he has due to a

[217] Augustine, *Conf.* X.22.34.

faulty understanding of what he desires – Marion will go on to impute a stronger and stranger motive to Augustine: namely that he 'hates the truth,' and not only his conception of this truth, but the truth 'as such.'[218] Here he overstates his case, but does so with few negative consequences for his reading of Augustine (although it does lead him down a questionable path when evaluating the historical reception of the Augustine's teaching, for example finding Kant a more faithful Augustinian than Aquinas!), and largely for an admirable reason. Marion labors under the misconception that for Augustine, in order to love, or to will, the good, one must be equally capable of loving or willing the evil, but only because he has correctly perceived the (positive) force of the love for the good, and the (equally strong) force of the love of evil; all he has missed in this evaluation is the *negative* or better *privative* nature of this latter force. Ultimately it is an ontological misreading of Augustine, and a failure to understand fully the weight which the 'very good' of Genesis 1.31 exercised on his thought, which here leads Marion astray, and keeps him from making the decisive break with Heidegger: for while he heads in the right direction to deny the (phenomenological or empirical) validity of the 'radical self-determination' of Heidegger's 'authentic' will, Marion retains an element of this determinism in his insistence that Augustine's scattered remarks on 'willing a lie'[219] mean that one must normatively pass through a phase of actively hating the truth in

[218] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 242.
[219] Augustine, *Conf.* X.40.66.

order to reach a state of loving it.[220] From such an insistence (in which, it must be acknowledged, Marion maintains that this sort of hatred is ultimately only directed towards 'the closest' or my self[221]), Marion can only introduce grace, again under the title of the '*da quod iubes*' prayer, as something of an artifice, a surprise exit, through which possibility and indeed actuality sneak into the impotence and the impossibility which so definitively characterized the *vita humana* only a few pages before.[222] Such an operation is undoubtedly an imposition on Augustine, whose account of the perverse (and never *evil*) will as willing only lesser goods – even to the point of willing nothing, or the nothing – is more rigorous and more natural in its connection to grace. Indeed Marion recognizes something of this logic (e.g., 'The bad will, in the last instance, wills nothing evil … but it wills nothing, it does not will, it fails itself'[223]) but is led astray by Augustine's perhaps overly eager language in narrating his (pre-conversion, pre-baptism) experience of the theft of the pears, in which he interprets his youth in this overly voluntaristic terms: '… I did not even *will* to enjoy the thing which I hungered to steal, but the theft and the sin itself … It was shameful and I *loved* it; I *loved* to die, I *loved* my fall, I did not love what this fall aimed at, but *I loved the fall itself*'[224] into asserting that this is the normative condition of temptation, at all moments of their conversion. Further, as we shall see below, it is important to note, as Marion

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[220] This is obviously an anti-Socratic, anti-Greek stance on the will: or at least stands against a caricature of Socrates. In any event, it is executed with unjustified eagerness.
[221] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 234 and 241.
[222] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 255-60.
[223] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 249.
[224] Augustine, *Conf.* II.4.9.

does not, that what Augustine loved was the fall itself, the *defectum,* in other words the *motion* towards (or, with more etymological rigor, the *unmaking* of) what he loved.

The account that emerges, *ex machina*, from Marion's overly inclusive but rightly intentioned characterization of humanity by their delights, is however very deeply Augustinian, particularly in the brilliant diagnosis of Augustine's Pelagian controversies: that the Pelagians fail phenomenologically at the precise moment that they fail theologically, by ignoring or denying that grace is in continuity with the free will, in fact authorizing and creating it. The false distinction between the human desire for the truth and the desire which is a gift from God, thus between a will and a good will, which threatened to emerge from Marion's insistence on the possibility of desiring the evil *qua* evil, here disappears, as both desires are at root a response, the fullness of desiring, in which 'I will what is given to me to love.'[225] Thus Augustine's final definition of conversion, as 'not willing what I will and willing what you will,'[226] rightly understood, denies the very possibility of willing – permanently, vehemently, *ex toto* – anything other than what God wills that I would will. Whether and how the object of such a willing stands in being, even with respect to the nothingness which Marion is happy enough to describe, remains somewhat mystical; in spite of his habitual shrugging off of the question, this consideration of the will is bound by the Augustinian turn to Genesis to at least speak of the will as

[225] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 260.
[226] Augustine, *Conf.* IX.1.1.

fundamentally a disposition towards 'the heaven and the earth.' Indeed Marion's ultimate move in *Au Lieu De Soi* will be to connect this conversion, as the hinge on which truth, language and the self rotate, up with creation, as that which precedes it and makes it possible, or even as that which is simultaneous with it.

Similarly, Marion's account of temporality gestures towards a cosmic liturgy, but does not consummate this move with either a theoretical reflection or an exegesis of *Conf.* XII-XIII

Before he makes this move, however, he is bound in at least two ways to make a detour between the will and creation into an explanation of time: on the one hand, the very structure of the *Confessions*, which have Book XI on time intervening before Augustine's considerations (or better, meditations) on creation and Genesis, and on the other, his Heideggerean commitments, however loose they have become at this point in his career, dictate such a move. In spite of both of these easily predictable commitments, however, the fifth chapter ('*Le temps ou l'avènement*') is perhaps the most surprising of *Au Lieu De Soi*: at the moment where his Heideggereanism could easily have taken at least a last gasp in the form of a simple exposition of how the *distentio animi* anticipates and indeed structures the central insights of *Sein und Zeit*, Marion here attempts to conserve for phenomenology a more radically Augustinian (and thus more radically biblical, as will emerge in the last chapter of this essay) account of time than

Heidegger achieved. In so doing he delineates two improper readings of the role of Book XI in the structure of the *Confessions* more generally: the first, that (by now we might hope passé) whereby Book XI is artificially isolated from the rest of the *Confessions* and treated as 'a philosophical treatise on time,' which is then compared with other similar treatments, 'nodding more or less willingly to his creativity';[227] the second, that by which Book XI is seen (in 'Greek' or 'philosophical' fashion) as that by which Augustine shifts his gaze from time and the self (I-X) to eternity and heaven (XII-XIII), with these realms understood as simplistically and dualistically as is possible. The misreading common to both is a failing to read them in the light of the *confessio* which opens the book: 'Can it be, Lord, that, since eternity is yours, you are ignorant of what I say to you? … But I excite to you my affect and that of those who read this, that we might all say "Great is the Lord and highly worthy of praise."'[228] In the first misreading this passage stating Augustine's intentions must simply be ignored, since its obvious re-citation of Psalm 47.1 (which also opens Book I) makes clear that there is a logical connection between the *confessio* of Book XI and the *confessiones* accomplished throughout the *Confessions*; in the second misreading, the particular nature of this connection is ignored -- namely that of mediating between the duality of Augustine's *ego* and God's *te* – is missed because the misreading falsely imports the duality of time and eternity onto it, the very duality which Augustine questions and disputes: if there can be no mediation between time

[227] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 261.
[228] Augustine, *Conf.* XI.1.1.

and eternity, then why make a *confessio* at all? In fact, as Marion pithily puts it, it is not first of all a matter of 'the question of the origin of time,' but 'the question of the origin of the *question* of time'[229] – why would Augustine even *ask* God about the origin of time, were there no chance of mediation between an eternal God and a temporal *ego*, wherein I could accomplish anything by my *confessiones*? Adding to this difficulty is the transition made here from a confession made in order to stir up Augustine's own love into that which is made to stir up love for God in the community of readers, since at that moment the confession, until now potentially mystical, a-cosmic and purely internal, must also mediate through the world. What is needed is a description not of time but of eternity, and more precisely one 'without confusion nor separation'[230] with time. Despite the jestingly Chalcedonian language, such an account arises (as we shall see) for Augustine not at the moment of the Incarnation, but with creation itself (the 'non-Greek concept par excellence,' he states again and putatively, without displaying for a moment a Greek thinker who falls into such a trap[231]): the confession of creation, or more precisely the 'interpretation of beings as created,' a 'place (*lieu*)' is established wherein 'the *confession* is made possible no longer only for one, but for the cosmic community … a *confessio* by the whole creation, in some manner cosmic, of the creator.'[232] Marion's impulse here to find a cosmic liturgy of a kind in Augustine, in fact as the culminating trend of the

[229] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 261.
[230] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 263.
[231] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 263.
[232] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 264.

Confessions, is undeniably correct, even if the articulation of the relationship between the individual and ecclesial *confessiones* and the cosmic *confessio* is left vague and indetermined: in what manner is this cosmic confession manifest? Is it after all merely hermeneutic (the 'interpretation' of beings as created), and if so, is this an individual or an ecclesial hermeneutic? Is it, like the individual *confessio*, doubly of sin and of praise – and what does this look like? These questions mist away as quickly as they are raised, and are not treated substantially even in the last chapter which treats of Books XII and XIII.

Marion's ultimate description of the *distentio animi* rightly privileges the two poles of creation and conversion, but again under-theorizes the biblical and ritual elements of these poles

For now, nonetheless, all that matters for Marion is to establish the cosmic liturgy Augustine's account not only of beauty but more crucially of *time*. Against any 'metaphysical' opposition to eternity, as against any 'neutral psychological description,' the interpretation of time as inescapably fixed to (divine and eternal) creation reconfigures time as an essentially liturgical function.[233] In strict parallel to his arguments regarding the logic of the *interior intimo meo* as applied to life, beauty, as the constant mutability and variation of all things *qua* created, emerges as a logic of non-non-contradiction: 'when one interrogates them[234] on the beauty which renders

[233] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 266.
[234] Sc. 'all these things which are around the outside of my flesh', *omnibus his quae circumstant fores carnis meae*: it is surprising that Marion does not even cite, let alone emphasize, this rather obviously proto-phenomenological formulation.

them divine, the things confess that they are not this beauty: "And what is this? I interrogated earth and it said 'it is not me'; and all that is within in *confessed* the same thing.'"[235] Time, here nearly controvertible with beauty, is that which fundamentally shows a being as neither identical to nor divorced from God, and so impossible to understand at all without theological reference, which in turn renders it impossible to understand exhaustively. In this very proper sense, we might refer to time as divine, albeit only by participating in the eternal act of creation. As a corollary, from a phenomenological standpoint, time 'only has sense in and for the world, and, even for this, it is not inscribed there as a mundane-being, but is disclosed as the mundane itself. Time comes *with* the world, it worldizes and *makes* world' (*il mondanise et* fait *monde*);[236] this latter proposal is to be seen as the strict consequence of Augustine's insistence, against a Manichaean complaint, that God does not precede the world temporally. As the 'mundane itself,' co-equal in creation with the world, time assumes its properly central place in Marion's account, as a theological reconfiguration of *differance*,[237] the temporal delay that the self (paradigmatically the human self) suffers, in its inability to seize on, define, or realize itself exhaustively at any given moment. In favor of the view that such a temporal delay and incongruity is the condition of humanity, qua created, for Augustine, Marion cites his previously explained examples of the repetition of Scripture that opens the *Confessions* (the self

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[235] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 265, citing Augustine, *Conf.* X.6.9.
[236] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 270.
[237] Indeed there would be no reason to use Derrida's by now rather dated neologism in his account unless in order to reframe it, and show how it was always at root Augustinian and thus susceptible to theological critique.

cannot express itself without borrowing on the language of Scripture), the logic of *memoria* as relying on an eternal 'immemorial' (the self cannot remember itself without reference to God – 'the memory of you was with me, … but *not yet* was I'[238]), and ultimately desire, that which most fundamentally defines the self, as itself (and not merely its object) escaping the present moment ('*Late* have I loved you'[239]). To this he adds a fourth, which in fact recapitulates them all under a personal key, and proves the irreducibly theological character of time: that of conversion. 'I said to myself: Behold, *now* is the moment, now -- and with this word *now* I was going towards what I had decided, I had nearly done *now*, and I was not doing it; but I was not falling back to the same point as before, I was holding myself nearly there, I was taking up the effort again, a little again, again a little away, and *now, now* I was arriving, I was holding it; and no, I was not there, I did not arrive there, I did not hold it, remaining between the death of the dead and the life of the living … and the *same point of time* I was held *in suspense*.'"[240] Due to this insistent and nearly existential crisis of *nows* fading into each other, slipping out of Augustine's reach, Marion comments: 'Thus if there proves to be a philosophical aporia of time, it will be necessary to know it and read it as also, and even first of all, the symptom of a theological crisis.'[241] If it is theological, it is no less ontological: rather than meditating at length on the famous aporia, here rightly dismissed as 'banal' because it is as

[238] Augustine, *Conf.* XII.17.23.
[239] Augustine, *Conf.* X.27.38.
[240] Augustine, *Conf.* VIII.11.25.
[241] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 275-6.

easily found on the pages of Husserl or Plotinus as those of Augustine, with which Augustine begins his pursuit of time – namely that 'If nobody asks me, I know, but if I wish to explain it to someone who asks, I do not know' [242] – Marion points out merely that this aporia reflects on and intensifies the already primary *monstrum* that I am to myself, simply in my being: 'precisely the question of time bears on my manner of *being*.'[243] Being and time, in the Augustinian formulation, have a taut yet disjunctive relationship: since time only *is* in the present, "…we do not in truth say that time is, except that it tends not to be";[244] but since this time, so limited, still constitutes the world as such, the question of time invites a questioning of the present, and thus that which is presented, presence. Predictably, this questioning takes the form of a problematization rather than an explanation: in a 'metaphysical' account, the present would be guaranteed a stable dominance over the other dimensions of time (and of being), and would in turn guarantee a sort of stability to that which it dominates, finally resulting in the guarantee of our being able to comprehend (and thus desire, remember, anticipate etc.) all times and all beings through the window of the present. In its theological resituation, however, even the first guarantee is questioned: the present is not, or at least is only relatively, which in turn topples the stability of the past, the future and all beings, up to the point of (especially) toppling the stability of our access to them. It is for this reason, Marion holds, and only secondarily distaste for the astrologers, that Augustine holds such a revulsion

[242] Augustine, *Conf.* XI.14.17.
[243] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 278.
[244] Augustine, *Conf.* XI.14.17.

for the definition of time as the movement of bodies:[245] the presumed stability in such a model denies the possibility of a time which *itself requires conversion*: beyond their common inaccessibility to knowledge, time and conversion are seen to share a fundamental instability, which gives rise to the epistemic inaccessibility, but in the same stroke delivers a different sort of knowledge. This latter, which Marion strictly opposes to the sterile and neutral knowledge of 'philosophy,' Augustine calls the *arcana praesensio futurorum*, the 'hidden presencing[246] of future things';[247] for Marion the etymology is important, as it discloses the *pre* -sensing, the sensation-beforehand, which derives from *memoria* but is more akin to a sort of anticipation of time as it comes to us in the unstable shift from now to now to now, etc. Since time is not only a de-centering, a displacement, but is itself de-centered and displaced, it does not merely measure the movement of bodies, but 'but provokes it, by producing the transition of the thing towards itself, its passage into another than what it was, its surpassing, its distancing with respect to itself.'[248] Due to this traversal of all things towards themselves through the theological excess that, in creation, constitutes them, the Augustinian *intentio*, which alone secures some relative degree of consistency in the 'flux' of time[249] must be rid of any Husserlian overtones for our ears: instead of gathering things together into a stable, if finite, view,

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[245] Augustine, *Conf.* XI.22.29.
[246] In Marion's French, *pré-sentir:* Chadwick renders the Latin into English as 'presentiment.'
[247] Augustine, *Conf.* XI.17.24.
[248] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 288.
[249] Augustine, *Conf.* XI.27.36.

the *intentio* in its original and theological casting 'only remains present to render possible the dissolution of the present itself, and to permit the passage, the dissipation and the differentiation of every thing.'[250] Marion in effect agrees with the famous Augustinian identification of time as a *'distentio'* (or *différance*), but pauses to ask: a *distentio* of what?

To answer this question, Marion turns to Augustine's phenomenology of St Ambrose's hymn, *Deus creator omnium,* in which *memoria* returns to play a decisive role in the determination and the measuring of time: before I sing a syllable, I have 'premeditated' the length of that syllable from my memory of what the song dictates, 'confided' it to my memory, and then sing it until it passes to my memory according to the pre-sensed determination of its length.[251] The attention I pay to the sound while I emit it and the expectation with which I await its completion (and begin to plan the next syllable) are both subordinate to *memoria,* with a subordination that I cannot exhaustively understand any more than I can understand the power of memory itself, with the result that both the ego and its temporality fall under the same 'shadow of unknowledge':[252] not indeed unknowable with the inaccessibility of the present moment, but 'in the "… *penetrale amplum et infinitum*" of my memoria, that which, without understanding it, nevertheless I am, for "the soul is itself memory."'[253] The difference here is vital: the continuity, however indirectly assured through *memoria* or *intentio*, is neither

[250] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 289.
[251] Augustine, *Conf.* XI.27.36ff.
[252] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 291.
[253] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 292, citing Augustine, *Conf.* X.8.14 and 14.21.

one of absolute presence nor absolute absence, but a sort of definitively contingent presence, 'the presence of the passage itself'[254] wherein the passage is 'proclaimed' and 'reclaimed' in the same motion. Thus the answer to the question is, of course, that time's *distentio* is a *distentio animi*, so long as this genitive is understood in both the subjective and the objective sense: 'The passing soul measures no passage other than its own. Time arrives as *what distends the soul, even as what is distended by the soul*,' such that '…time only temporalizes the world by being temporalized first by and in my soul.[255] In other words, and more succinctly, 'I am not only *in* or *with* time, I am time itself.'[256] This identification of time as a *distentio* that is both the action of the mind, and the action on the mind, Marion understands as a decisive break with the Greeks, who here receive some very welcome specification (namely Plato, Aristotle and Plotinus),[257] who assign temporality to physical substrates, not the human mind, and thus posit a neutral and objective measurement of the duration of the present moment which Augustine denies in favor of 'an original sensing' of the (individual) soul. In this understanding, we might question the ease with which Marion dispenses of the Plotinian world-soul in favor of the Augustinian *animus meus*, since even elsewhere in Marion's account, Augustine can theorize no *animus* that is not at least synchronous with the creation of the world, if not in a sense

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[254] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 294.
[255] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 295-6, emphasis mine.
[256] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 297.
[257] Plato's inclusion on this list is confusing, since at no point in this discussion does Marion cite, let alone discuss, any Platonic texts; his discussion of Aristotle and Plotinus draws on *Physics* 4.10 and *Enneads* 3.7 and 3.13, respectively.

dependent on it: nevertheless, he is aware that such a deeply individualizing account of time must be sharply guarded against veering in a Kantian 'radically subjectivist' direction, by insisting that the *animus* is only distended and distending because it is created.[258] In fact such is the distinctive stigma of the human mind: 'Of all creatures, the *mens* of man bears most profoundly the mark of its creation and, for this, is offered, more fragile and more pliable than any other, to the *distentio* of a temporalization.'[259]

This 'offering' reveals the true agenda of Marion's, and indeed Augustine's, investigation of time: they share in a pursuit of time as a gift which mediates between two seemingly diachronic events, namely the (past) creation of 'the heaven and the earth' and the (future) conversion (itself also a creation) of the self. Between these two events arrives, as the site of both, the event of the world: or better, since this arrival is only understood as arriving *towards* a mind, the *advent* of the world, which is recognizable as 'the advent of time itself,'[260] the arrival of the passage of the present in the soul. This advent marks the *distentio animi* as the 'saturated phenomenon par excellence,' since in it is given both 'the closest being-given (my self in relation to others) and the being-given in totality (the world),' in other words communal and phenomenological conversion and creation, both of which are necessary to underwrite any temporalized facticity.[261] But before Marion makes this move from time forward to creation, he performs a familiar two-

[258] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 300.
[259] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 301.
[260] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 304.
[261] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 303-4.

step, a step from Augustine forward to Heidegger and a step from Augustine back to the Bible. First, to Heidegger: Marion defends Augustine's 'fall into times' against a crude misunderstanding of Heidegger's complaint that such an account suggests time as accidental to *Dasein*, rather than its most proper characterization as 'factical existence.'[262] To correct this misunderstanding, which alleges that Augustine has failed to distinguish between the time which marks proper existential temporality and that which marks a decay (*Verfallen*) – or in more familiarly theological terminology, temporality insofar as humanity is created, and temporality insofar as humanity is fallen – Marion takes recourse to the well-noted[263] philological nexus of *'tentiones'* which surround and structure the *distentio*. By inviting attention to these (especially *intentio* and *extentio*) as specific modalities of time, Marion rightly claims, Augustine's seemingly fatalist definition of time as *distentio* as only one modality, however inevitable, of temporalization, and moreover one which is, despite Heidegger's selective reading, not particularly central to *Conf.* XI.[264] In order to understand the relationship between these three modalities, Marion downplays the extent to which the Augustinian *distentio* relies on the Plotinian *diastasis*, and emphasizes on the contrary its biblical source, in Philippians 3.13-14, a commentary on which forms the end of Augustine's formal reflections on time:

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[262] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 82.
[263] Cf. J. M. Quinn, "Four faces of time in St. Augustine," *Recherches augustiniennes* 36 (1992).
[264] Marion acknowledges his indebtedness to Chrétien for this reading: cf. *La joie spateuse* (Paris, 2007), p. 46.

> But "since your mercy is better than all lives," behold, my life is a *distentio*, and "your right hand has taken me" in my Lord, the Son of Man, mediator between you [who are] One and us [who are] many, in many by many, so that by him "I know him in whom I am known" and, leaving behind old days, I follow the Unique, "forgetting the things that pass", not *distended*, but *extended*, not towards the things which will come and which pass, but "towards those which are before," "I pursue," following *no distentio* but a *tension* [*intentio*], the "palm of the calling on high."[265]

Here Marion's translation, far more painstakingly literal than conventional translations, draws attention to the way in which Augustine's more speculative thought occurs between biblical margins: the '*diastasis* of Plotinus is repealed and located in the *emprosthen epekteinomenos* of St. Paul, and thus the *distentio* is opposed to and leans on another disposition, here called *extentio*.'[266] Marion perhaps overreaches in his rejection of Plotinus, but the essential move here is the defiant rejection of the 'metaphysical'[267] opposition of the *distentio* to an (in fact impossible) 'imitation of eternity,' but in the *extentio*, an insistently human and finite mode of temporality, which 'extracts me from the dispersion [*distentio*] by stretching me outside myself.'[268] Noting that Philippians 3 arises (in fact for the first time in the *Confessions*) in the account of the 'vision at Ostia,' Marion suggests that the conversion from *distentio* to *extentio* takes place in a communal vision, indeed in an *intentio* that comes from faith and above all love.[269] The Pauline logic is the hermeneutic key to

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[265] Augustine, *Conf.* XI.29.39, citing Ps. 32.4, 62.9, and Phil. 3.12-14.
[266] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 307-8.
[267] Here putatively neo-Platonist, but in fact more Stoic.
[268] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 309.
[269] Augustine, *Conf.* IX.10.23.

the 'question of the origin of time': the 'attraction [*intentio*]'[270] by which 'distraction [*distentio*]' is converted to 'extraction [*extentio*]' precisely does not consist in 'tending towards things which will come, *futura* … but those which remain and will remain in front, *ea quae ante sunt* ':[271] the things which are ahead not because they lie in the future, in a 'natural' and pre-eschatological attitude, but because they are in front of us in the 'advance of disequilibrium,' the positive and essential characterization of time as impermanent, unstable, and thus more to be desired than to be known theoretically. After the 'conversion of time,' phenomenology appears as in fact eschatology: but if such is the case, it is not clear how one could avoid the conclusion that it is therefore equally ecclesial, cosmic, and in some sense *metaphysical*.

When he finally arrives at the exposition of Genesis, Marion points the way towards a thoroughly Christianized Platonism, and unintentionally shows the vacuousness of the "Being" he rejects

The next and final chapter, *La création du soi*, however, finds Marion hastening to clarify: his commentary on Augustine's commentary on Genesis begins by insisting that there is nothing of the 'Greek' impulse to explain the 'world' (he notes wryly that Augustine wrote no treatise entitled *peri tou kosmou*), here understood as the 'closed world' of 'physical beings or beings in

[270] This translation, which attempts to contend against the 'exclusively epistemic' understanding which Husserl has given *intention*, is certainly clever, even if it might have been more winsome to have engaged Husserl head-on.
[271] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 311.

general.'[272] In his insistence that the exposition of Genesis 1.1-2 does not form Augustine's response to the 'question of the world,' still less a progression (labeled 'Thomist, Cartesian or Kantian') from 'a rational doctrine of the *mens* and of God' in *Conf.* I-XI to 'a rational cosmology,' he notes that Augustine rarely speaks of the *mundus* at all, and when he does, he restricts his meaning to the Johannine sense of 'the totality (ontic, if one likes) of what I love, of being insofar as I love it.'[273] As a result, the 'creation of heaven and earth' is a 'perfectly aporetic' formulation, so long as it is understood as a response to a 'metaphysical question,' in particular the Heideggerean[274] (or at root Leibnizian) question of 'why is there in general something rather than nothing?' For so long as it is so understood, it is an apparently and obviously inept response, both on phenomenological grounds (because the distinction between *ens increatum* and *ens creatum* is 'deprived of any phenomenological justification') and biblical grounds (the creation narrative in Genesis, and to this we could add that of Job 38-41 or the account of the creation of Wisdom in Proverbs 8, refuses to be submitted to any questions of 'why'). On the contrary, Marion suggests, Augustine's interpretation of the first verses of Genesis is to be understood as in the first place a *critique* in advance of such a question: where Heidegger, in even asking this question, assumes the insufficiency of the theological response to the question, Marion reads Augustine as challenging precisely the arbitrariness of the question itself. In his attempt to restore a sort of

[272] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 315.
[273] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 316 n.1.
[274] Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics,* 2.

phenomenological justification for the question of creation, Marion opens the door for a conversion of phenomenology, in two senses: a conversion which phenomenology performs upon its practitioner, and a conversion which phenomenology undergoes, from Heideggerean fundamental ontology to Augustinian biblical exegesis; in the former case, as obviously in the latter, the pivotal locus for this conversion is that of creation:

> We no longer ask [as does Heidegger] if creation responds to the question of *why* for the world, but, inversely, we ask to what question creation brings a response … It could be that creation brings no response other than the response itself -- in the sense that everything, in heaven and on earth, only arises in the creation precisely for this, *to respond*.[275]

Marion therefore takes very seriously the fact that Augustine prays, at the beginning of Book XI (and not, as we might have expected, at that of Book XII) for understanding of how God created heaven and earth: the 'taking up and reading' of Genesis parallels in the ecclesial sphere that which Augustine performed in the individual sphere at Cassiciacum, repeats it and expands the exhortation of Romans ('Put on the Lord Jesus Christ') to the cosmic sphere, to the point that 'the whole "order, perfectly good, of good things" which concludes the whole of the *Confessions*, accomplishes precisely the initial praise of God *laudabilis valde*.'[276] The response which precedes, supports and forms Augustine's *confessio* is exactly parallel to the goodness and the beauty

[275] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 320.
[276] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 321, citing Augustine, *Conf.* XIII.35.50 (and of course I.1.1).

that all things have insofar as they appear.[277] Mediating between these two responses is an interpretation, 'communitarian and liturgical,' which, with the first (in support of this, Marion notes that in XI.1.1 Augustine announces that his intention is 'that *we* might all say' the exact *confessio* which opens the *Confessions*, 'Great are you, Lord, and greatly worthy of praise') literally co-responds to the second, and allows its beauty and its goodness to shine forth as praise: the communal *confessio* 'alone permits this [sc., permits the created order to praise God]: the things themselves cannot be given to see themselves as created by God -- in other words, as given by God -- if nobody interprets them as such, as witnesses to the glory of God.'[278] There is something of a return of totality here, from a different and putatively non-metaphysical perspective, namely that of a 'universal' praise of God by praising 'the plurality of things' as created by God: 'This can only be by a universalized *confessio* of God, by all believers, in relation to all things, as gifts.'[279] And despite his intentions to the contrary, something very like a Proclean theurgical ontology arises out of this universal, liturgical, phenomenological interpretation:

> It results that the hermeneutic of creation consists precisely in *not* defining things as beings (still less as beings subsisting in an uninterrogated presence) but in recognizing them *as* gifts received under the title of creation and rendered under the title of praise, the presence of which is only maintained in this exchange. In fact, creation and praise reciprocate each other and render each other mutually possible. "All these things

[277] Marion here is again clearly invoking a very literal understanding of X.6.9, *Interrogatio mea intentio mea, et responsio eorum species eorum*: 'my question was my intentio, and their response was their beauty.'
[278] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 322.
[279] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 323.

> *praise* you [as] *creator* of all." In other words, the formula "your works praise you" must be understood as a pleonasm, or rather as an equivalence.[280]

Regarding this exchange and mutual reciprocation, Marion invites an important qualification of his *oeuvre* as a whole: "'Creation" does not appear in the lexicon of being, nor of Being, but in the liturgical vocabulary, as *confessio* and as praise, which moreover alone recognizes and establishes it.'[281] There is, then, no way to understand 'Being,' in Marion's perennial allergy to it, except as 'that which is not liturgically determined,' a sort of nature without grace, which moreover on Augustinian grounds, as Marion will soon note, is an impossibility or even a nonsense: 'grace … englobes the whole horizon' of creation.[282] The extent to which Marion and his post-*God without Being* critics have talked past each other can be easily seen: "Being" is empty and purely formal for Marion, to the point where one wonders why he is at such pains to avoid it.

All the same, most of the import of this statement is the counterintuitive claim that praise 'alone' recognizes and establishes creation; for the first time, the full force of Marion's 'non-metaphyical' conceptualization of creation appears: 'Creation does not render the *confessio* possible, as the ontic place of its exercise, but it itself only becomes possible from the *confessio*, its liturgical precondition.'[283] We have, in other words, been taken far afield from the 'bracketing of the giver' of *L'Etant donné*:

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[280] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 324,citing Augustine, *Conf.* XI.5.7 and XIII.33.48.
[281] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 324.
[282] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 380.
[283] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 325.

'There is no possibility of seeing the world as heaven and earth created by God, if one has not first consented to praise God as God,'[284] so that if there is anything like a cosmology, an ontology or a phenomenology, it must come rather directly from, and respond to, the liturgical.[285] In support of this, Marion considers the paradoxes of place which open *Confessions* I: 'I do not have another place in me than what God has made; therefore God cannot come into me, without my first coming into him or discovering myself immediately already in him: I am not a place for God, rather I have a place in him.'[286] He contraposes the comforting nature of the 'metaphysical' (or better *univocal*) reading of creation as 'as the production of a world of beings by the exercise of an efficient causality' to two aporias which result from these paradoxes of place: one theological, that since God is "'entirely everywhere without anything containing you" … he is revealed all the more as "*secretissimus et praesentissimus*, at the same time the most secret and the most present'";[287] the other anthropological and by now familiar, that '…in finding myself in heaven and earth which come from him and are in him, I above all experience what a distance separates me from him …the creation of heaven and earth leaves me without place for praise, because, more essentially, I do not know the place (*ubi*) of myself, allowing anything whatsoever, let alone

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[284] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 324.
[285] In this respect it is surprising that Marion doesn't cite *Sermo* 241.2, *confessio eorum pulchritudo eorum* (cited in Chrétien, *Saint Augustin et les actes de parole,* p. 15) phenomenality is in fact convertible with the cosmic *confessio.*

[286] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 325-6.
[287] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 327, citing Augustine*, Conf.* I.3.3 and I.4.4.

myself, to inhabit me.'[288] This 'utopia of the self' stumbles upon the theological aporia of the *secretissimus et praesentissimus* at every turn, each time that 'that I no longer listen to me, but to heaven and earth *insofar as created*';[289] in recognizing the *quaestio* of its created and thus non-self-identical quality of heaven and earth, and in fact by proclaiming it and precisely confessing it, heaven, earth, and the self each 'overcome' that *quaestio*, in a conversion of place, from the utopic *here* to the divine *there*, which Marion claims is the properly Augustinian definition of praise: 'And I say: *Where* are you, my God? Behold, *there* you are. I catch my breath a little bit *in you*, when I stretch my soul over me in a voice of exultation and confession.'[290] A place, ultimately the only place, is given *in God*, by virtue and by means of the *confessio*: such is the reading of Genesis that Marion's Augustine performs, in three movements: an ontological meditation on the phrase *invisibilis et incomposita*, a gloss on *caelum* as *caelum caeli*,[291] and the exercise of finding the Trinity in Genesis 1.1-2, or better locating genesis within the Trinity.

The first of these, the dimension of the earth as 'invisible and unformed,' determines the earth referred to in Genesis as *not* simultaneous or synonymous with the earth as we experience it, always 'seen and touched' through forms,[292] but instead as indicative that, in Marion's words, 'more originally and although the biblical text does not explicitly mention it, matter

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[288] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 327.
[289] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 329.
[290] Augustine, *Conf.* XIII.14.15, cited in Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 331.
[291] Ps. 113.15.-16.
[292] *Conf.* XII.8.8.

has been also created, in the same stroke.'[293] Here Marion claims that Augustine breaks with the Greek heritage, and in a welcome change, names names: 'from Plato to Plotinus' matter has the status of *principle*, as a given, before a demiurgic creation, and thus erotically irreducible (an ambiguity on which the Manichaeans seized, since then matter could be the source of evil), whereas Augustine's more radical narrative of creation as taking place within the *confessio* disposes it from this status: 'Thus the earth presupposes matter, but matter itself presupposes creation. Then matter offers no place, neither to the earth nor to the *confessio*, but it is received as all other things … itself to be worked by the *confession.*'[294] Whence Marion's gloss on the phrase *de nihilo*: since matter is itself a gift and an exercise of praise, in the creation of matter God has "'made something even of nothing, from and *with* nothingness"… for God not only created *from* (ex) nothing, in order to exit from it and substitute for it a being (after nothing comes Being): he has above all created *with* (de) nothingness, in order to make being with, in the guise of material, nothingness itself.'[295] This, the 'utopic' logic of non-identity, imagines creation not as God's combat against the *nihil*, but his redemption thereof: 'God, by creating the created, does not thereby abolish nothingness, but assigns this nothingness itself to the created by assuming it as created *by* him,'[296] thus opening a 'site' for the *confessio* from the earth. The second movement echoes this site from the perspective of 'the heaven of heaven,'

[293] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 333.
[294] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 333-4.
[295] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 334, citing Augustine, *Conf.* XII.7.7.
[296] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 335.

the *caelum intelligibile*, which, although characterized by Augustine as that of the *mens pura*, is still to be distinguished from the Plotinian *nous* in that it remains a creature: 'the contemplation, even purely intellectual, of God remains marked by the distance from the created in its possibility to praise: thus, the *confessio* alone unites to God, not simple knowledge, which remains nothing more than a means and a mode.'[297] Marion here acknowledges that it is not the case that knowledge, even theoretical knowledge, has no role in the *Confessions*, provided that such knowledge does not pretend to escape its nature as created and temporally conditioned; similarly, Marion does not object to a formulation of hierarchy of *capacitas* between humanity and angels, or even amongst humanity, which might be imposed by this knowledge, so long as these hierarchies are flattened insofar as they all take place in the same place of the *confessio*, even if to different degrees or modes, of the intelligible, by intelligent creatures. The 'heaven of heaven' remains created and temporal, but corresponds to the *extentio*, freed from 'distracted' temporality not by an atemporal knowledge (lest Augustine be viewed as a Gnostic) or an atemporal immateriality (lest he be viewed as never quite escaping his Manichaeism) but by *love*, the adherence to God which can finally underwrite, 'as by excess,' an adherence to the self;[298] the creation of the self that takes place within the *confessio* is, if one likes, a return to paradise, rather than an escape to eternity. The third and final movement of Marion's commentary on the Augustinian Genesis does not, as the first two, take its

[297] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 337-8.
[298] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 340.

cue from a single word or phrase of Genesis 1, but from the tripartite temporal structuring of the books which discuss it: Book XI as the 'present of things past' in *memoria*, Book XII as the 'inaugural *now* of the creation of heaven and earth,' and Book XIII as the 'eschatological *expectatio* … of the origin watching over our future.'[299] Marion points out the obvious: 'In fact, these places prove to be, in the last instance, Trinitarian: it only becomes possible to praise God as God if God gives the time and the place for it. And *where* are these found elsewhere than in God himself?'

Though he intends this as 'universal rule,' applicable to the whole created order, Marion extrapolates somewhat outside of the boundaries of the *Confessions* in order to explicate the 'opening of the *confessio*' further, with particular reference to humanity made 'to the image and likeness of God'. The importance of this phrase in establishing humanity as paradigmatic of creation resides precisely in its difference from the rest of creation, made *secundum suam similitudinem*, according to its own likeness: Genesis 1.26 claims that humanity is not only made according to the likeness of 'an other,' but of 'another of a maximal alterity,' namely God, so that humanity, with its sharpest degree of difference to itself, testifies most sharply to God. It is thus the case that 'humanity is defined by this very thing which remains without definition.'[300] There is more: the importance of the word *imaginem* in this formulation is not lost on Marion, the theorizer of the idol and the icon. Much to his credit, Marion allows the breadth of the Augustinian doctrine of

[299] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 341.
[300] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 344.

imago to revise his earlier and far too disjunctive account, according to which the defining effectivity of the icon is limited to its eyes; all of humanity, and not just its capacity for gazing and for eye-contact, points its intentionality toward something transcendent, however ill-defined that something might remain. Humanity is 'to the image of God' whom 'no name, no image and no concept can pretend to comprehend'[301] and thus is imaged precisely by the lack of (exhaustive) imaging. Here enters the familiar language of the gaze, or more precisely of motion (*ad*) traversing humanity as image or icon: the image 'only appears as this movement *towards*, and only this *intentio ad* keeps a resemblance for it.'[302] Thus emerges something like an anthropological and existential *via negativa:* 'humanity carries the image of God in the same measure in which it leaves its resemblance to itself (*ad suum genus, ad suam similitudinem*) and is risked to resemble nothing… by resembling no image, especially not a pretended imago of God, but by carrying the resemblance of the *style* of God.'[303] Though this intriguing suggestion is left inchoate, something of its logic appears in Marion's quite correct insistence that the various images of the Trinity entertained in *De trinitate* IX-XI – foremost among them the triad of memory, intellect and will – 'do not offer [an image of the Trinity] in themselves as their stable content, but only in the

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301 Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 350.
302 Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 346. This insistence on the love of *motion* as a primary metaphor for creation and thus conversion has its correlate in the motion of the fall (cf. Augustine, *Conf.* II.4.9, 'I loved the fall itself, and not that towards which I fell'), as Marion surprisingly fails to see.
303 Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 346.

measure which they refer this content *to* God himself,'[304] that is, not as a brute imposition of the categories of human *capacitas* onto the persons of the Trinity, but exactly as the reception of these capacities via participation in, and their attentive and desiring return *to*, the Trinity. Thus surfaces the 'indefinition' of humanity, its apophatic refusal to submit to the comprehension of formal categories, whether those are of 'the rational animal, the *ego cogitans*, the transcendental I, the absolute self-consciousness, the "animal evaluating in itself" (Nietzsche) nor even as the "lieutenant of Nothing," still less as the "shepherd of Being" (Heidegger).'[305] But no sooner does this 'indefinition' emerge as a *quaestio* and a dis-placement than it is its own theological solution, witnessing to its place in the similarly in(de)finite God: which motivates the formulation, perhaps Augustine's most famous, of humanity as *inquietum*, 'restless' or, as Marion renders it, 'in a disequilibrium' which characterizes it as fundamentally un-characterizable, exactly because humanity is made 'to' God, *fecisti nos ad te.*[306] This raises a fundamental question to the Heideggerean account, which Marion hesitates to answer: does this *inquietum* itself rest as an answer, albeit an apophatic answer, within time and with no reference to eternal praise, or is it, on quite the other hand, entirely and inexhaustibly an ontological *question*?

As is well known, Augustine's *inquietum cor* is neither individual nor interminable: this opening paragraph speaks of 'our' heart as being in disequilibrium 'until' it rests, or reaches equilibrium, 'in you.' So too,

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[304] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 347.
[305] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 350.
[306] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 353, citing Augustine, *Conf.* I.1.1.

Marion's description, in its very apophaticism, points to a sort of definition found in the rest of God on the seventh day. Importantly he connects this rest (which is irreducibly theological, because 'only God gives rest, because only God has it, and only God has it, because only God is it'[307]) with Augustine's account of motion as weights tending to their proper place: he notes that this depends on a strictly physical understanding, comparable to Aristotle's, of the local movement of elements, linked up with the physical claim of Wisdom 11.21, 'You have ordered all things in measure, number and weight.' Nonetheless, and crucially, Augustine makes a shift to this account on which he relies, by asserting (and again, the fame of this passage tends to obscure its significance): 'My weight is my love: wherever I am carried, it is my love that carries me.'[308] It is love, for Augustine as for Marion, that explains and governs both creation and eschatology, running the motion of the unquiet manifestation of phenomena and their eventual return to resting in their proper place in God – for Augustine, weight need not be a gravitational pull downward; indeed, as Marion notes, it is originally and paradigmatically a force of ascent.[309] For this reason, it is difficult to avoid referring to 'my weight is my love' as a very strictly meta-physical determination, indeed as the root and end of any claim of any metaphysics worth the name – and thus we are bound by charity in the end to interpret Marion's habitual rejection of 'metaphysics' to reject only anything that is not love.

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307 Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 354.
308 Augustine, *Conf.* XIII.8.9.
309 Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 364.

Marion's final emphasis on love is not nearly as contrary to the *analogia entis* as he believes; this disjunct is more polemical than substantial

For this reason, forsaking the hardly initiated attention to Genesis, Marion turns to an elucidation of Augustine on love, in the last and longest section of *Au Lieu De Soi*, provocatively titled "The Univocity of Love." This could be understood in two very different ways: the denial of (absolute) difference between God's love for creation and creation's love for God, or the denial of (absolute) difference between different modes of created love. At the end of *The Erotic Phenomenon*, Marion characteristically allows his meaning to remain paradoxical, ignoring the latter of these understandings of univocity, and hovering between affirming and denying the former: 'God loves in the same way as we do. Except for an infinite difference. When God loves (and indeed he never ceases to love), he simply loves infinitely better than do we … He loves like no one else.'[310] In its simple structure of assertion and then denial, this is not a very satisfying account of 'univocity,' nor is it entirely clear, in its allegedly pure phenomenological description, why anybody would be interested in developing or defending such an account. Here, however, at the end of *Au Lieu De Soi*, Marion intends to accomplish at once an Augustinian basis for the former meaning, and a clarification of the latter: in both cases it emerges that Marion is interested in

[310] Marion, *Erotic Phenomenon*, 222.

defending his 'univocity' against an 'equivocity' of love, without engaging the vocabulary of 'analogy' which in any case seems a more accurate name for his description. In the first case, what Marion means by the 'univocity of love' comes to light as a facticity, indeed the most radical facticity in the Augustinian anthropology: love is 'the ultimate condition of possibility for the self,' such that, in more familiarly Augustinian terms, "'[t]here is nobody who does not love. ... We are not asked to love, but to choose what we love.'"[311] The (theological) relationship between this facticity and its founding love (divine love as the creation, the *facere* in *fecisti nos ad te,* which underwrites it) is implied clearly enough, but remains implicit; Marion's primary interest is in the second case, that of establishing a 'univocity' of human loves (of God, neighbor, self and things) which nevertheless enfolds these loves as distinct modes. On the first point, Marion's target is not (for example) Aquinas or other theoreticians of analogical love, but the once influential account of Anders Nygren, the equivocal argument of whose *Eros and Agape*[312] is skillfully dismantled on textual grounds.[313] In this dismantling Marion points to several places in the Augustinian corpus where Augustine not only in practice, but even in theory, equates *dilectio* and *caritas*, and both of these with *amor*, which is also capable (at times) of referring to *cupiditas* or

311 Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 366-7, citing Augustine, *Sermo* 34.1.
312 Anders Nygren, *Agape and Eros*, trans. Philip S. Watson. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982.
313 It is surprising that, from the vast literature on Augustine and love, Marion restricts his focus to Nygren and a brief mention of Arendt, paying no heed to even Burnaby's seminal *Amor Dei.*

even *concupiscentia*:[314] though it is more difficult than Marion supposes to generalize about Augustine's usage of different words for *amor*, he is right to call this 'univocal' and even 'transcendental' insofar as at various points Augustine (or indeed the Vulgate) uses them all in similar ways. The distinctions which can arise from this initial univocity, the 'modes, intrigues and wills' by which love eventually can and must be declined, are in fact all theological, such that any love, even illicit, ill-executed or poorly placed, is rendered possible by love of God alone.[315] Two results follow: one, illicit loves are defined exclusively as the attempt to love something created and contingent as though it were God, and two, reciprocally, 'to enjoy God -- in fact, the only possible enjoyment -- renders in the same stroke possible, by extension and in reference to him (*propter Deum*) to enjoy all the rest, since this rest constitutes precisely a gift of God. Whence the possibility and even the promise that, if I *only* enjoy God for himself, all the rest will become lovable, no longer by *cupiditas*, but well and truly by *caritas*.'[316] Love of creation and love of the Creator are not univocal in the sense that either could logically or chronologically precede the other, even substitute for the other, but only in the radical sense that, in the light of the latter, even the former is transfigured into, eventually, love of God.[317] The distinction

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[314] See above all *De civitate dei* 14.7, where Augustine cites multiple biblical texts as justification for this assimilation.
[315] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 374.
[316] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 372.
[317] Marion ignores the famous, and the more obviously analogical, account determined by the distinction between use and enjoyment in the first book of *De doctrina christiana*: if he had taken it into account, this would have balanced (but

between Marion's account here and that of a Thomist analogical conception of love is in the end only one of emphasis: both of them rely on and authorize a development of an *ordo amoris*, where the love of a thing is parallel to and relies on the love of the self, which is parallel to and relies on the love of the neighbor, which is parallel to and relies on the love of God, but in Marion's account, the emphasis lies on the similarity between these loves, since they are all in the end not *merely* parallel (though they might certainly also be parallel), but in a rich and deep sense identical, while the more traditional analogical view would emphasize the 'infinite difference' – but one merely of degree – between them. In both cases, enjoyment of a thing can only be *in Deo* and *propter Deum*, and can thus only be truly enjoyment if it is 'converted' from *cupiditas* to *caritas* or *dilectio*, these now being understood not as univocal by their recognizable exercise, still less (as for Nygren) by their object, but in the end only ineffably, by their style: 'It is never a matter of not loving, nor of loving anything but God, but of knowing to love all according to the appropriate mode, God and the gifts of God.'[318] Here enters, subtly, as through the back door, a form of knowledge (or at least *prudentia*): to discern between the gifts of God and God himself is no doubt beyond any pretended neutral practice of reason, but comes to light here as a higher and more spiritual practice. This reasoning introduces the principle (here called 'paradoxical') of indirect love: 'in order to reach loving the self, it is better to love him by whom one lives, than to directly love the self, by

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certainly not contradicted fundamentally) the account which appears in *Au Lieu De Soi*.

[318] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 374.

whom one knows that one cannot live';[319] in other words, loving the self (or the neighbor, or indeed any created thing, even the totality of the heaven and the earth) must pass through the love of the most distant and most present intermediary, God. But even this paradox cannot dispute an equivocity of love as well as Augustine's interpretation of John 21.15-18, in which Christ interrogates St. Peter about his loves: in the end, instead of asking, as he had done twice before, *diliges me*?, he asks, *amas me*? From this, Augustine concludes, "…the Scriptures of our religion do not say that *amor* is one thing, *dilectio* or *caritas* another."[320] Not content to rest here, Marion points out beyond Augustine that this account challenges and even overturns habitual conceptions of distinctions between loves, asking, 'Must one not even conclude that, when it is a matter of definitively committing to Christ and assuming the mission of the shepherd of his Church, *amare* fits better than *diligere*, contrarily to the current usage, which accords to *dilectio* a gratuity and disinterest which one refuses to *amor*?'[321] If there exists a 'univocity of love,' it emerges here in its highest and finest form precisely as reciprocality, exchange, and precisely not disinterested gratuity: such is the lesson not only of Christ's words, but even his pattern of choosing those words, in finally condescending to St. Peter's habitual usage of *amare*. The biblical and Augustinian re-examination of love leaves not even such a familiar concept as 'univocity' in its domesticated place.

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[319] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 375.
[320] Augustine, *De civ. Dei* 14.7.
[321] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 378-9.

In the very last pages[322] of *Au Lieu De Soi* Marion makes the degree to which he intends this exegesis of Augustine to function as a critique of the philosophical tradition's assumption of 'the subject':

> The ego thus is not itself itself: neither by the apprehension of the self in the knowledge of the self (Descartes, at least according to the common interpretation) nor by a performative (Descartes in a less common interpretation) nor by apperception (Kant) nor even by auto-affectation (Henry) or anticipatory decision (Heidegger). The ego does not even accede to itself *for* another (Levinas) or *as* another (Ricoeur) – but it only becomes itself *by* another. In other words, as a gift, for all comes, without any exception, by and as a gift…[323]

As a destabilizing gift, the double meaning of the 'place of the self' which renders the title of this work hard to translate (both 'In lieu of the self,' proclaiming the displacement of the self as the subject of Marion's investigation, and 'In the place of the self,' asserting a newly figured and literally re-placed self) finally emerges as parallel to the double conversion 'of' (in its subjective and objective genitives) phenomenology. After this 'conversion' phenomenology must be itself, and yet not itself – retaining all its previous characteristics, but somehow trans-figured. In *Au Lieu De Soi* we are only seeing the first fruits of the new phenomenological engagement with love, or with imagination, or with politics: these have all been treated, or at least hinted at, in intriguing manner, but insufficiently. This intriguing insufficiency is perhaps to be expected, given that these things are

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[322] With the exception of the provocative but for my purposes irrelevant appendix, in which Marion argues philologically and convincingly against the translation of the divine name (or more accurately, the divinely simple intensive pronoun) 'Idipsum' as 'himself.' This appendix is yet another clarification of Marion's stance on Aquinas, and an important further point of conversation between Marion and those critics of Marion who still bristle at the most central concepts of *Dieu sans L'Être*.
[323] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 383-4.

inexhaustible; nevertheless, without question Marion's refusal to engage with Augustine on ontological grounds, seen at once in his antipathy for ancient thought and his seeming ignorance of the very concept of analogical being, shuts this door to him further than it needed to be shut. In the next chapter, I will entertain the work of Chrétien, whose ad hoc and essayistic forays into Augustine's proto-phenomenology are not nearly as eccentrically and narcissistically tied to his own system, hoping to reflect and clarify the insights that *Au Lieu De Soi* has begun to invite.

IV. Chrétien and Augustine

Abstract

As we have seen, Jean-Luc Marion's recent 'approach' to St Augustine, while certainly possessing much by way of charm and of value, is ultimately not convincing as a theological appropriation, still less as an historical evaluation. This is due to at least two reasons: on the one hand, Marion is committed to a decisive philosophical and historical break between Platonism and Christian or biblical theology, and on the other hand, his phenomenological burden is in the last instance to describe, critique and refine a concept (or non-concept) of the *self*, to the exclusion of the consideration, rejected as 'metaphysical,' of existence, actuality, and transcendence. This commitment and this burden are jointly manifest in *Au Lieu De Soi,* and in spite his strident and subtle readings, neither the Augustine of the *Confessions* nor the broader Augustinian corpus can support them.[324] In contrast, Marion's friend and colleague Jean-Louis Chrétien has, over the course of his entire career, reflected on and argued alongside Augustine in a less dogmatically anti-metaphysical manner. In so doing, Chrétien has allowed the fertile interchange of the Platonic tradition and rigorous attention to Scripture which defines Augustine's thought to be tilled and cultivated. It is the burden of this chapter to make known some of the

[324] Further, if Joeri Schrivjers is to be believed they do not get us very far phenomenologically either. See his "In (the) Place of the Self: A Critical Study of Jean-Luc Marion's '*Au Lieu De Soi*. L'Approche de Saint Augustin," Modern Theology 25:4, October 2009, 661-686.

fruits of these cultivations, with special but not exclusive reference to his explicit interaction with Augustine, and to allow them to ripen further. Most of the chapter's argument will heed Chrétien's 2002 monograph on Augustine, as yet ignored in the Anglophone world, *Saint Augustin et les actes de parole*,[325] but before approaching this intriguing work, I'll examine a few representative essays from earlier works which engage Augustine's thought. This examination will display the breadth of Chrétien's knowledge about and interest in Augustine, both as a theologian and as a precursor (if not outright practitioner) of phenomenology. I hope therein to prove that Chrétien's less polemical commitment to the phenomenological tradition in fact yields a more profitable engagement with Augustine, even when viewed from phenomenology's own goals and standards, broadly construed. Many of the themes which Marion (and for that matter Heidegger) considers with respect to the *Confessions* (time, the self and the world, language) have the definite stamp of Chrétien's earlier engagements; thus my presentation of Chrétien's oeuvre, insofar as these themes are inarguably central to the phenomenological tradition, will have Heidegger's and Marion's treatments in view. But such will be for the most part the case only obliquely, implicitly and partially, as I will attempt to let Chrétien speak for himself, much like Chrétien himself allows Augustine to speak for himself. Methodologically speaking, then, this chapter will take a tone more driven by argument, in order to provide an architecture in which Chrétien's more meditative approach can shine forth in all its rigor. In so doing, I hope to provide a

[325] Jean-Louis Chrétien, *Saint Augustin et les actes de parole*. Paris: PUF, 2002.

portrait of Chrétien's Augustine as, in a complex relationship of roles, Platonic philosopher, biblical exegete, and proto-phenomenologist, tracing these roles in the trajectory of Chrétien's work over the last twenty-five years, as this appears in three representative monographs: *L'inoubliable et l'Inespéré*,[326] *L'Appel et la Réponse*,[327] and *Saint Augustin et les Actes de Parole*,[328] with a concomitant attention to how these roles shift when applied to the loosely similar themes of the latter three works.

Chrétien insists that epistemology, when viewed from his central theme of excess, has an ontological dimension; this shows the fruit of a serious engagement with Greek philosophy

The primary burden of *The Unforgettable and the Unhoped for* is to take up, in a new key, but one which draws deeply from the Platonic tradition, a Levinasian critique of Husserl on time and forgetting. In this portion of the essay, I will pay close attention to the terms of the discussion which Chrétien sets up in the first chapter of the work, as the double context (both Platonic and phenomenological) for an examination of how Augustine figures in Chrétien's account of time, forgetting, and the memory which precedes the self, dislocating any idealist entitlement predicated on the self-sufficient

326 Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 2000, translated by Jeffrey Bloechl as *The Unforgettable and The Unhoped For* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2002). References are to the translation.

327 Paris: Eds. De Minuit, 1992, translated by Anne A. Davenport as *The Call and the Response* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2004). References are to the translation.

328 My translation of this work is forthcoming *as St Augustine and the Acts of Speech*, SCM Press, 2014; the page numbers from all citations of this work will refer to the French text.

presence of the self to itself. He begins this account by giving a brief reading of the *Meno*, Plato's sustained account of knowledge and memory (and that which has born the brunt of commentary with regard to the Augustinian account of these). In a refreshing change from any glib treatments of the 'Meno problematic,' Chrétien shows, by means of a close and careful reading of the Meno, that this short dialogue is too rich to be summarized by the simple claim (which, if it matters, Socrates himself rejects as intellectually lazy) that one cannot seek something without knowing what it is one seeks, and thus in some sense possessing it already. In the preface to the work, Chrétien reverses the negative determination of forgetting that such a summarization of the Meno presupposes, showing that a "first forgetting" is the nucleus of the Platonic teachings on *anamnesis*, which "opens a properly human temporality, which is that of the search for the truth and for oneself," a destitute temporality which alone permits us to recognize that we are not our own origin, such that we can "truly become ourselves" by recognizing this constitutive difference.[329] If, he shows, forgetting is a privative loss, ontologically and logically dependent on memory or knowledge, such as is taught by Leibniz or Hegel, then memory is a tool of reason, or more accurately, of an a priori self-consciousness. If, on the other hand, and in keeping with the Christian theological and mystical tradition of *creatio ex nihilo*, forgetting occurs in a "flash of divine Nothingness -- the pure illumination of the abyss of all beings, and the absolute origin," then the

[329] Chrétien, *Unforgettable*, xix-xx. In a manner crucial to setting Chrétien off from the earlier Marion, Heidegger is given credit not for inventing but only for reprising the initially Platonic project of a positive thought of forgetting (32).

horizon of human existence emerges as a past which "essentially" withdraws from all future memory.[330] In evoking Plato against Leibniz, Chrétien critiques the latter's attempt to demythologize anamnesis: while he (and various neo-Kantian readers of Plato whom Chrétien reads attentively) would find in the mythical pre-human being of the soul by which Plato expresses his doctrine a meaningless shell for, or a distraction from, a rational kernel expressing an a priori self-consciousness, Chrétien insists that so to suppress the mythical is to "lose what is most precious in Plato" -- namely, the rigorous thought of the past, of forgetting, of loss itself, which Chrétien is eager to elaborate and emphasize as one of Plato's core concepts, and as the scene onto which his other doctrines may emerge. At stake in Chrétien's defense of myth in general, which "shatters the false evidences prevailing over the self," and of this particular myth, is the question: is there room in philosophy for time, or for the "unrepresentable immemorial"?[331] Put another way, if there is a knowledge (or *theoria*) which is prior in me even to my being human, due to my "having seen true being" in a pre-human soul, can either philosophy or my self afford to forget that I have initially and originally forgotten this knowledge? And could it be that it is not Platonic recollection, even in its mythical trappings, but a thoroughly modern and anti-Platonist cheap "memory" of our selves and what we believe ourselves to have learned, which prevents us from practicing a true relation to wisdom? After all, as Chrétien is happy to remind us, Plato's Meno, fond of reciting

[330] Chrétien, *Unforgettable*, 1-2.
[331] Chrétien, *Unforgettable*, 8.

the "doctrines and citations" he has learnt from the sophists, learns nothing from his encounter with Socrates (himself a paragon of forgetfulness and absent-mindedness), while the young servant in the same dialogue, unencumbered with such self-deception and unashamed of his ignorance, learns (or recollects) the rules which govern the proportions of square numbers. Recollection thus begins with avowed ignorance, and thus "the desire for knowledge and the tension of the search for it" which therefore opens onto the future.[332]

From this oft-discussed, but under-read, episode, Chrétien generalizes:

> The other past, the absolute past, will remain forever an absolute past; it will not be recaptured or rediscovered, or re-presented, rendered present again. It does not come back as what may be repeated or reproduced. However, it does come back to us from the future: what in the past made us comes back to us, it befalls to us, in and as the task of being.[333]

He illuminates this with a contrast between empirical, ontic forgetting, and this originary, ontological forgetting -- the first attempts to overcome forgetting by way of remembering what we have forgotten, and thus to recollect our pre-natal self, while the second only seeks to recollect *that* we have forgotten, and to seek by (and only by) our very existence to live towards truth, being and thus (from a human perspective) towards the future.

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[332] Chrétien, *Unforgettable*, 14.
[333] Chrétien, *Unforgettable*, 14.

In an implicit recollection of Augustine's troubles recalling his own childhood,[334] Chrétien says: "No rebirth repeats birth. My own immemorial remains forever forgotten and lost."[335] But the baptismal language here bears emphasizing. It reminds us that, for Augustine, I simply do not care to remember my birth; the literary trajectory of the *Confessions* is also heavy with the phenomenological theme that my infancy is banal in comparison to my rebirth, and in comparison with that which gives me both birth and rebirth. Representation and this crude order of knowledge is static and self-sufficient -- the Platonic recollection of the absolute past, which "escapes every repetition and every representation," is characterized by a wild and tensive "excess," which "founds me, sends me and destines me, and is known to me only obliquely, in the excess of being."[336] Chrétien intends this language of being to be understood both in the quotidian sense, as the mere and brute fact of existing, and in the entire philosophical context of the Platonic *ousia* (which he reminds us is the explicit *initium* of Plato's last exploration of anamnesis or of time, in the *Phaedo*) -- both of these he combines in the *Phaedrus'* "erotic recollection," where a soul recognizes itself not in the face of a romantic fated lover, but in a communal and nearly choral "rediscovering and recollecting the beautiful," which is external to both lovers, as one encounters the illumined only in encountering, however obliquely, and even without expressing mentioning or even recognizing it,

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[334] Augustine, *Conf.* I.6.7.
[335] Chrétien, *Unforgettable*, 15.
[336] Chrétien, *Unforgettable*, 16.

light.[337] But lest this foray into love and the erotic strike the strict philosopher as rhapsodic, Chrétien reminds him that Plato (much to Kant's judgmental chagrin) shares a precisely parallel admiration (*thauma*) in the realm of geometry: "an overabundance, an excess of meaning in the properties of representations; the encounter, in what is necessary, with an unexpected meaning and fecundity that seem rather to have expected us, to have been in expectation of our thought," which Plato assigns to "our intellectual affinity with the origin of all beings."[338] Chrétien takes Plato seriously: this destabilizing *thauma* does not deny some stability, or the existence of an immutable nature, nor indeed the human quest (call it metaphysical) to relate to the immutable in some way, but in fact predicates the entire human "vocation" upon this immutable nature and truth:

> I am always already in the truth, which is itself always and forever. But for human beings, this 'always already' is that of forgetting: the immemorial consecrates it to the future, it comes from the future itself, though without ceasing to be immemorial and without us being able to return to the origin of our being or coincide with it.[339]

In this affirmation, however qualified, of a transcendental and explicitly metaphysical adumbration of the self, the expression of *consecration* is significant, resurrecting the Augustinian language of excess and fertility as *blessing* and spiritual goodness.[340] In other words, with relation to Heidegger's

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337 Chrétien, *Unforgettable*, 17.
338 Chrétien, *Unforgettable*, 19, citing Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, p.363 -- translated in English as *The Critique of the Power of Judgment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).
339 Chrétien, *Unforgettable*, 19.
340 Cf. Augustine, *Conf.* XIII.12.27.

assertion that anamnesis is the proper name for the ontological difference,[341] Chrétien relegates all human life and inquiry to this acknowledgement of what we could in a more theological register term "creation": he summarizes, with reference to Plato's corpus, that "to be a self amounts to not being able to coincide with one's own origin."[342]

Before Chrétien's argument moves further in the Platonic tradition to an analysis of Plotinus, for whom recollection is properly mythical, according to his counterintuitive (at least to a post-Freudian age) definition of myth as an analytic, and thus temporally dividing and temporally distinguishing, rather than a synthetic overarching and a-temporalizing power, it retains and intensifies its defensively philosophical provenance: "Whatever the origin and nature of the religious traditions of which Plato makes use in this myth, he has without any doubt detoured and re-routed them toward philosophy, for the very object of recollection is not of the order of religion, but is the truth of being toward which science and philosophy struggle."[343] Nevertheless there is nothing in the Platonic tradition, as Chrétien himself recognizes, which forms the grounds on which to erect such a strict disciplinary wall: indeed, to predetermine the avenues on which the "truth of being" may arrive to us would contradict in theory and in practice the very tension between tradition and novelty into which Chrétien's analysis of Plato intends to intervene. Even "our knowledge of [an original forgetting] can remain the same only through acts that are always new, through a constant

341 Cf. Heidegger, *Parmenides* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998).
342 Chrétien, *Unforgettable*, 20.
343 Chrétien, *Unforgettable*, 20-1.

renewal of our acts of understanding. To retain a memory through time is to always exercise new acts of remembering."[344] The novelty so evoked is parallel to the perpetual "rejuvenation" which we undergo just to remain our current age, or the "peril" of forgetting to which we submit ourselves when we expose ourselves to the risk of being, or again, in a Platonic lexicon, but one no less familiar to the biblically trained ear, the "exodus" which forgetting performs upon knowledge. These three terms -- rejuvenation, peril, exodus -- are all synonymous terms for a human being's relation to being or to truth, in Chrétien's retrieval of the Platonic tradition, but as Plotinus' reflections on anamnesis are so hostile to a crudely temporal literal reading of the Platonic myth that the majority of commentators ignore or downplay their role in his thought, Chrétien's retrieval faces a decisive choice -- will he emphasize, as the neo-Kantian readers who wish to claim Plato as their own proto-idealist, the Plotinian preoccupation[345] with the forgetting of the self?[346] Or will he refuse this phenomenological (in the narrow sense) impulse in favor of a mystical and mythical reading of Plato, with a poetic "reflection on the absolute past"?[347] In fact, Chrétien complicates this simple duo by veering his analysis in a surprising direction: he brings in a critique of Plotinus, from the later "theurgical" Platonist Proclus, according to which Plotinus' crucial and determinative error is to deny that "the soul is …

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344 Chrétien, *Unforgettable*, 21.
345 Which, moreover, is not entirely foreign to the phenomenological tradition. Cf. Marion, *Au Lieu De Soi* passim.
346 Cf. Plotinus, *Enn.* III.7, IV.3.
347 Chrétien, *Unforgettable*, 23.

completely descendent into the sensible."[348] Due to this choice, Plotinus' only partially descended soul is to the same extent immune to an initial forgetting, such that a portion of the soul, and so a portion of the self, is never exposed to forgetting at all. For this reason, Plotinian recollection is a "return (sc. of the self) … to the origin, and an origin that one has never properly left -- rather than a gathering, without return, of the truth given and withdrawn in forgetting."[349] Chrétien is careful to affirm that Plotinus is not nearly so culpable in this regard as are the neo-Kantians[350] -- indeed, Kant himself is more subtle than are the Kantians, in Chrétien's estimation -- for the direct recollection of the beautiful self which Plotinus prescribes for the self who would be philosophical is still a task, a vocation, and thus difficult work, rather than an a priori given. Nonetheless, the accent which Plotinus, due to the doctrine of the undescended soul, places on the self as not only the locus but also the object of the process of recollection is indeed a "transformation" of Plato's presentation of the same, with its emphasis on specifically external beauty.

Chrétien's reading of the Platonic tradition includes theurgical Platonists, and this inclusion allows him to argue for a more sophisticated relationship between philosophy and theology

348 Chrétien, *Unforgettable*, 24.
349 Chrétien, *Unforgettable*, 24.
350 Cf. Chrétien, *Unforgettable*, 26-30 for the careful retrieval of certain aspects of a particularly Plotinian reflection on the Good as the immemorial.

More to the point for the present study, although Chrétien will wait until the following chapters to introduce the Augustinian thought of loss, the self, and beauty[351] into this history of the Platonic tradition, when he does so, Augustine appears, alongside Plato, to emphasize the constitutive impotence of the self to, on its own terms or by its own powers, recollect itself, or recollect any other thing, except (in the guise of the *interior intimo meo* and the *superior summo meo* -- that is, divine inwardness and divine excess) God, the overwhelming and wounding voice of beauty which is at once most at home in the human soul, and most foreign to it.[352] And we can add to this that in so doing, Augustine is not only in keeping with the Platonic tradition, but is also more apparently phenomenological than Plotinus, in the sense that though he does not neglect to theorize the self as the locus of recollection, the self is not (as it is for Plotinus) the only or primary object of recollection: by setting his aim to that which is *interior* and *superior* to the self, Augustine believes himself to have found not only his own self, but also, in the indirect approach of the creation to the creator, the appearance of all other things which the creator has created. In much the same vein, Chrétien's reading of the Platonic tradition accents the famous phrase, akin to Levinas' *Otherwise than Being*, according to which the Good is beyond being, *Epékeina tés ousias*. With a heavy stress on the temporal dimension of this *beyond*, Chrétien claims (rightly) that the Platonic dialogues, and to some extent the tradition they form, are contrary to and already in excess of the crude sense of metaphysics

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[351] Drawn at first, for obvious reasons, nearly exclusively from *Conf.* X, although he will go on to draw more surprisingly and more persuasively from *De trinitate*.
[352] Chrétien, *Unforgettable*, 89-90.

that Levinas *et alii* allege them to found and authorize – but exactly this excess is what saves them from being anti-metaphysical in just such a crude way.[353] And the elaboration of this critique of Levinas clarifies the odd distinction between religion and philosophy which Chrétien has above asserted: Levinas' cherished "divine commandments do not, in fact, share in the immemorial and a past other than all memory: they come under a sacred history … which must always be remembered."[354] Thus Chrétien's demarcation of his present project as belonging more to philosophy than to religion is not to be understood as a denigration of the theological -- indeed, such would send a perplexing message to Janicaud and other critics who allege that Chrétien is in any event more a theologian than anything else -- but instead precisely as a universal, even an imperialist, claim that the immemorial has over all realms of thought and life, a refusal to be cordoned off to the accidents of any particular religious tradition (in which Chrétien perceives but does not describe concrete practices of *anamnesis*, such as cult or prayer).

Unsurprisingly in this context, Proclus, the pagan Platonist who above all (save perhaps Plato himself) has thought through the philosophical import of ritual and prayer, sits more closely at the feet of Plato's myths and images than does Plotinus. For example, he makes of the river Lethe a symbol of the forgetting not, as for Plotinus, only of the human body,[355] but

[353] Chrétien, *Unforgettable*, 30.
[354] Chrétien, *Unforgettable*, 31.
[355] Plotinus, *Enn.* IV.3.

of the "whole of the sensible world."[356] Chrétien's treatment of Proclus more generally is very positive, and it is indeed in Proclus' commentaries on the Platonic dialogues that he finds the thematization of the whole of his concept of a positive construal of forgetting: the *logoi* "present in us according to being" by which we recognize our initial forgetting,[357] forgetting as "completely contrary to vacancy," which weighs us down with the care and the desire which the recognition of our forgetting arouses, in short, "Forgetting [as] at once distress and the way out of distress … Recollection [as] the passage from an understanding of the inarticulate to articulation."[358] In this passage, and as if to serve as a final brick in the wall which divides both Platonism and phenomenology from any sort of idealism, Chrétien reminds us that the recollected ideas (or forms) evoked by Plato are in kinship with the soul, but "by no means in an identity."[359] The richness of the Platonic metaphors of kinship and generation are fertile ground for Chrétien's wordplay of excess: the ideas, far from being any *a priori* categories or knowledges, are at best "pregnant" with the future of anticipation, such that the Good is perpetually and by definition in an excess to us which is measured by nothing other than forgetting, than our forgetting of it and the forgetting of it which constitutes us most originally.[360]

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356 Chrétien, *Unforgettable*, 34, citing Plato, *Republic* X.621a-d.
357 Chrétien, *Unforgettable*, 34-5.
358 Chrétien, *Unforgettable*, 36.
359 Chrétien, *Unforgettable*, 37.
360 Chrétien, *Unforgettable*, 38.

Beyond Marion's simplistic fetishizing of forgetting, Chrétien views forgetting as a creative and participatory act

The second essay of the collection begins to invoke Augustine more frequently, beginning with a reflection on the Augustinian "vast spaces and ample palace" of memory,[361] which aims to ask whether forgetfulness is a loss which is destructive of memory, or simply a different and negative modality of memory, or even a special faculty thereof. Chrétien answers in support of the latter possibilities, and in fact strengthens them: forgetting is the "foundation and condition" of memory, which constitutes a "making" rather than a destruction. This makes possible the institution of a "poetics of forgetting," as the art of describing what is "most vital in [memory's] power."[362] This counter-intuitive claim comes, for Chrétien as for Augustine, from the accumulative power of time, and the limits of intentionality in the mere present moment when faced by time's immense and overwhelming flux:

> It is self-evident that under the normal conditions of consciousness, it is impossible for me to remember in a same present moment everything that has ever occurred to me, and above all if I conserve it down to the finest detail. The integral presence of the past is thus identical to its latency, its indestructibility is simultaneously its being held in reserve, and it is preserved in being reserved … In order for the memory as such to be able to appear, it is necessary that certain aspects of the past be erased and disappear.[363]

[361] Chrétien, *Unforgettable*, 42, citing Augustine, *Conf.* X.8.12.
[362] Chrétien, *Unforgettable*, 42.
[363] Chrétien, *Unforgettable*, 47.

Even more can be claimed: this limit is an essential definition of humanity -- as Plotinus denies the name of 'memory' to the infinite self-consciousness of an astral body,[364] which can "grasp itself in a single and unique intuition without lack, loss, interval or distance,"[365] so too Augustine, while speculating on such an "instantaneous intuition [of a] totally reassembled past," nonetheless attributes this power, if it exists, only to "a kind of divine power which will ensure that all the actions … of every individual will be recalled to mind and presented to the mind's view with miraculous speed."[366] He incorporates biblical language into this philosophical insight (or does the causality run the other way round?), finding this to be the meaning of Revelation 20.12, that God alone may hand us the "book" which fully and exhaustively captures our selves: our selves not only as written, but, in continuity with Marion's reading of Augustine, selves which are as far away as possible from self-identity, relying as they do on "an other of a maximal alterity." Chrétien's following meditations are characteristically restless and wide-ranging, drawing as deeply from Proust and Peguy as from Plotinus. But the essay's final quotation and its resting place -- that of St John of the Cross, referring to the emptiness of memory as a "yearning and a melting away of the soul for the possession of God"[367] could just as easily have come from the opening chapter of the Confessions, or from Augustine's inability[368] to find God in his memory. And yet this is not a yearning without hope for

364 Plotinus, *Enn.* IV.4.
365 Chrétien, *Unforgettable*, 52.
366 Chrétien, *Unforgettable*, 53, citing Augustine, *De civ. Dei* XX.14.
367 Chrétien, *Unforgettable*, 77.
368 Augustine, *Conf.* X.17.26.

renewal: "As we bear it," Chrétien concludes, "it does not give itself again, but gives itself as the very excess of its presence that no memory can contain."[369]

Anticipating the concerns of *The Ark of Speech* and of *Saint Augustine and the Acts of Speech*, the third essay of *The Unforgettable and the Unhoped for*[370] begins by opposing the Greek *alastos* (unforgettable), from the tragic register which gives it linguistic and conceptual birth, to the first gift of Mnemosune in mythology: namely, *forgetting*, and its primary vehicle:

> Speech [parole], song, music, the guardian powers of the senses. To the ecstasis of suffering is opposed the ecstasis of the word … Speech comes from a divine Memory that never becomes ours, even if it does dispense its favors and gifts on us in offering another unforgettable, that of our misfortunes [*alastoi*]. Yet neither of them is a secret kept jealously within us.[371]

In the shadow of an Aristotelian-Thomist tradition, wherein the unforgettable is primarily the non-repeatable, non-representable habitual practice of virtue, Chrétien posits an Augustinian-Heideggerean thought wherein the unforgettable is, no more repeatable and certainly no more representable, "what has being and has been in being."[372] This ontological

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[369] Chrétien, *Unforgettable*, 77.

[370] And the final essay which here concerns us: although the collection's final essay, on the unhoped for as a different modality of the unceasing, has much -- from a meditation on Euripides' *Alcestis* to a stunning comparison and rapprochement of Philo on Genesis on the one hand, and Heraclitus on the other -- to recommend it as an example of Chrétien's willingness to think simultaneously in both biblical and classical vocabularies, with results that are as surprising as they are compelling, Augustine is absent from it, and so these considerations are too tangentially related to our project to be entertained.

[371] Chrétien, *Unforgettable*, 80-1.

[372] Chrétien, *Unforgettable*, 84, citing Heidegger, "What calls for thinking?" in *What is Called Thinking* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1976).

functioning of the gift in memory, parallel but irreducible to even the richest ethical account, depends on a conception of the memory which is not limited to the past -- for this would render it representable, and thus at best aesthetic rather than ethical or ontological -- but can operate as the memory of the present and also of the future. Chrétien rightly and explicitly recognizes such to belong firmly "to the Augustinian tradition," beginning with *Confessions* X but also present in Bonaventure and Guillaume of Saint-Thierry.[373] Further, such an ontological functioning of memory does not leave behind a certain sort of ethical eudaimonism: in a brief but illumining discussion of *De Trinitate* XIV.14.21, on the "*memoria Dei*," the human memory which forms our relation to God, Chrétien makes clear the extent to which this memory depends on the assurance (by faith and by Scripture, not as an *a priori*) of a past and future beatitude.[374] On this basis, he evokes the thoroughly Augustinian account given by Guillaume of Saint-Thierry of the creation of humanity according to the *imago dei* as Trinitarian, comprising intellect, will and (most centrally here) memory,[375] a creation which is "unceasing" and occurs under the rubric of a constant renewal from without: "God comes to memory in order to strike it with a wound of love that eternity itself could not close again … To call God unforgettable is to say that we are forever, at the most inward part of ourselves, transpierced by his light, and not that we would always suffer it in the same way."[376] Chrétien goes on, as thought this

373 Chrétien, *Unforgettable*, 84-6.
374 Chrétien, *Unforgettable*, 87.
375 On Augustine and the *imago dei*, cf. Ch 5 below.
376 Chrétien, *Unforgettable*, 89.

were necessary, to invoke explicitly the *interior intimo meo* as the Augustinian thought which renders the phenomenology of memory possible, again, and crucially, in the key of the *imago dei*: "For the image, insofar as the image of the infinite, always manifests the excessive, which we must love and respect, but which is not at all at our disposal."[377]

Of this important and impressive essay, one equally important criticism may be levelled in relation to a remark made offhand, at its end: "For St Augustine, the *memoria Dei*, unforgettable and inexhaustible presence of alterity, is necessarily at work in all the spiritual exercises that we might possibly commit, but it does not reduce to a determinate practice and does not designate a specific spirituality."[378] In one sense this is true: Augustine is not concerned, either in the *Confessions* or the *De Trinitate*, with prescribing certain prayers or rituals, such as we usually describe with the phrase "spiritual exercises." But, as the specifically intellectual prayers scattered throughout both works cry out, the very practice of *philosophy* embodied by these works is the discrete and particular spiritual exercise to which Augustine calls any who would experience, deepen and enrich their sense of a *memoria Dei* -- indeed, it is for him the exercise par excellence of the *spiritus*.[379] Chrétien's failure to perceive the nature of philosophy *as* a spiritual exercise for Augustine is merely an inability to think far enough in the right direction on which he has embarked, and towards which his reflections on

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[377] Chrétien, *Unforgettable*, 90.
[378] Chrétien, *Unforgettable*, 95.
[379] On this notion of philosophy as spiritual exercise, specifically as the ground of Augustine's critiques of the Platonists, cf. Ch 5 below.

Augustine gesture, in spite of the passage quoted above: in the training, discipline and working of the spirit can be found not only the Augustinian reflection on phenomena, but also the culmination of the relationship of theology and the love of wisdom in his thought.

The relationship between self and world emerges in a creative and vocal response to beauty, viz. praise

"I am telling the same story over and over, which is myself and the world," says William Faulkner.[380] Chrétien takes this rather poetic claim up in a specifically vocal sphere in *The Call and the Response*. He introduces this work by asserting that every performance of the voice, no matter how quotidian, has "at its core" the combined voices of "all that it answers," the voices and silences which precede it and "call" it forth: "There is no first voice" by which we could escape this choral and sonorous context of all speech, which is simultaneous and synonymous with "the world."[381] This assertion itself calls forth, necessarily, questions: what thought or thoughts can express the appearance of our voice, through which "both call and response become incarnate," and how does the incarnation which thus takes place in our voice manifest itself in all of our bodily senses? These questions, perhaps more than any others, invite in Chrétien's estimation a reflection on the traditions of thought from which they draw their momentum, since they

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380 Malcolm Cowley, *The Faulkner-Cowley Files. Letters and Memories 1944-1962* (New York: Viking, 1966), pg. 14, cited in *The Unforgettable and the Unhoped for*, pg. 121.

381 Chrétien, *The Call and the Response,* 1.

are in part asking how our voice and our thought themselves rely on the voices of our forebears, not in this case exclusive of rational metaphysics or biblical theology.[382] Chrétien is thus not at all tempted to be defensive of his proclivity to have wide-ranging bibliographies -- asking questions about our voice in relation to other voices, our body in relation to other bodies, and the like demands not only an interdisciplinary approach (for on what grounds would we reject relevant thoughts from any given discipline?) but also a meditation on this very interdisciplinary approach. All of this Chrétien presumes and argues is necessary to maintain a meticulous "phenomenological perspective."[383] As above, the present analysis will attempt to concentrate on Augustine's role in the study, but especially because Augustine too refuses to disclose whether, at any given moment, he considers himself to be operating as exegete, bishop or metaphysician, such an alchemic process will at times seem too artificial to maintain with any degree of rigidity.

The first chapter of this work is equal parts critique of the Heideggerean thought of voice as "correspondence" to a call and meditation on the Greek alignment of the beautiful (*to kalon*) and the call (*to kalein*). In both instances, the argument is one of origin: Chrétien does not hesitate to credit Heidegger as the origin of the 20th century thought according to which the voice is always a response, in the first case, and in the second, Chrétien's radical etymological approach affirms this thought to be inherent in the

[382] Chrétien, *The Call and the Response,* 2.
[383] Chrétien, *The Call and the Response,* 3.

original language of philosophy. If beauty is "call, vocation and provocation," it is those whose thought and voice were formed by the Greek language (and these range, significantly, from Plato to Paul and beyond) who can help us give voice to it in French or English. And although Heidegger has heard, and can help us also to hear, beauty as the call which is the origin of our voice, careful and inclusive attention to these Greek thinkers denies what Heidegger affirms: that our response to it can also correspond to it, in some measure be commensurate with it, while for Plato, Paul and Chrétien (and we can add, as Chrétien does not, Augustine), such a claim is an hubristic impossibility. The centrality of the Greek language in Chrétien's argument here precludes much consideration of Augustine, whose grasp of Greek is notoriously spotty. So it is that the pegs on which his critique of Heidegger hangs are primarily Plato and direct commentaries on Plato by Proclus, Hermeias of Alexandria, Marcilio Ficino and others,[384] and even his theological sources (predominantly Denys) are hellenophones -- the medieval thinkers he cites (Aquinas, Eriugena and the like) he argues, rightly, to be summoned indirectly into this Platonic tradition by virtue of Denys' influence on them.[385] One might have expected, at the intersection of Heidegger, Platonism as mediated through the Western Middle Ages, and the Pauline theology of the call in creation, no better summation of this train of thought than the mystical protophenomenological experience of Augustine

[384] Chrétien, *The Call and the Response,* 6-14.

[385] One exception, or radicalization, of this trend is found in Eriugena's relation of the Greek "*boein*" to the Latin "*bonus*," which boldly transgresses this linguistic and conceptual line (17).

in Confessions X.6.10. But Augustine's entry onto the scene of *The Call and the Response* is deferred until the opening of the next chapter. For this reason, although Chrétien's careful commentary on the careful commentaries (on Plato or on Denys) deserves careful commentary, both for its intrinsic elegance and for its value to our consideration of interdisciplinarity and the voice, our analysis will entertain the argument of the second chapter in greater detail.

The burden of this chapter, "The visible voice," is the elaboration and the defense of a certain porosity between sight and hearing, such that voice and image are not easily separated, much less pitted one against the other (as they are in for example Reformation-era polemics). In it, Chrétien argues that, in the thought of a voice which sees or (citing a title of Paul Claudel) an eye which listens, there is nothing of the "empty paradox," and everything of a "rigorously phenomenological property" of perception and expression. Asking whether this thought is expressed and explored in the history of philosophy, Chrétien gestures briefly to Merleau-Ponty, but quickly moves well behind him to Augustine's *Confessions*, and more particularly to the passage cited above, wherein Augustine ascribes to God "a certain light and a certain voice, a certain perfume and nourishment and embrace."[386] On the spiritual senses by which God, in these sensory modalities, is to some degree apprehended, which are "beyond the sensible but not beyond the sensorial," Chrétien remarks: "Our senses still make sense after we have turned to what is purely spiritual. After evoking a light, a voice, a fragrance,

[386] Augustine, *Conf.* X.6.10.

Saint Augustine concludes: 'It is this that I love when I love my God.' The question, however, bounces right back: 'And what is *this*?' The precise nature of the sensoriality involved remains obscure."[387] The answer to the famous question "What do I love when I love my God?" opens onto another questioning, of an increased rigor and intensity, this time not posed to Augustine's self or to God, but to the external world, in the key of attention (*intentio*): "My question was my attention, and their answer was their beauty (*interrogatio mea intentio mea et responsio eorum species eorum*)."[388] In the Latin of this passage, Chrétien appropriately reads the lack of verbs (even *esse*, which Chrétien is happy enough to read as simply an auxiliary and tautological verb) to imply the strictest possibility identity between the two terms. Beauty *is* a response, and so a voice, and furthermore, one which only emerges in a dialogue. This has decisive implications for any thought of sight or what is seen: "More intimate to the gaze [regard] than sight is the fact that it listens. It is not enough to open one's eyes to see, the same eyes must question and make themselves the soothsayers of the word that each thing bears within itself but also ripens into song at its surface."[389] This illumination of the voice of beauty, particularly as a response, is in continuity with the Platonic tradition according to which beauty is and emits a call, and shows the deep affinity of call and response:

> Things of themselves call us and invite us to interrogate them. Their beauty calls by responding and responds by calling. To be in need of a word, to suffer from a lack of

[387] Chrétien, *The Call and the Response,* 34.
[388] Chrétien, *The Call and the Response,* 35, citing Augustine, *Conf.* X.6.10.
[389] Chrétien, *The Call and the Response,* 35.

> word, is already to belong to the word, to be preempted by it in the very motion through which it finds itself anticipated. [390]

This "motion" can never begin on its own terms, nor does it possess its own future -- the dialogue between the self and the world takes its "breath" from "the invisible," such that the answer which the self or the world provides to its originary call is always "inadequate" to it, always "falls short," in brief is perpetually breathless when faced by the breath of excess. The disparate elements of the world "answer by dispossessing us of any possibility of being satisfied with them and stopping at them … Every voice says its inadequacy and therefore [says] what exceeds it."[391] Likewise every visible thing testifies to an excess of imaging; these finitudes which bear the weight of infinity are, if not interchangeable, then at least crossable, "*interlaceable*"[392] -- a thought which is not unique in the Judeo-Christian tradition to Augustine, but also present in Aquinas, Luther, and Philo, whose commentary on Exodus 20.18 ("the people all saw voices") anticipates the Lukan theology of Pentecost: the visible voices "gave rise in each soul to a new sense of hearing, far superior to that which is mediated by the ear."[393] Chrétien drives this inter-mediability of sight and sound home, along with the inter-dependence of external matter and perception, with regard to our own spiritual and physical senses: "[Beauty] assumes on our part no special organ ready to receive it; rather it creates in us the conditions of its reception."[394] But, at the other end

[390] Chrétien, *The Call and the Response,* 36.
[391] Chrétien, *The Call and the Response,* 37.
[392] Chrétien, *The Call and the Response,* 38.
[393] Chrétien, *The Call and the Response,* 41.
[394] Chrétien, *The Call and the Response,* 40-1.

of the spectrum, for this dialogue in which the visible voice of beauty speaks to occur, our own voice is also necessary; Chrétien closes this chapter with a gnomic, but certainly deeply Augustinian, thought that "For the visible to lose its voice, our own would have to become blind and perish, ceasing to answer it and to question it."[395] Our voice only responds to beauty's call. But this response is no small thing, for without it, and without the *intentio* which it implies, beauty's call would remain silent: "Otherwise heaven and earth would be uttering [God's] praises to the deaf."[396]

Manifestation is always mediation, which implies a participatory metaphysics that Chrétien hesitates to thematize as such

From this affirmation, Chrétien moves his attention to a philosophical tradition inverse to this Augustinian meditation on the visible voice: that of an "inner" voice, present although silent, within the self. In his reflections on this "other voice" two points especially germane to the present study emerge: in the first instance, the dialogue between Augustine and Reason (conceived as a voice at once internal to Augustine and sufficiently foreign to him that a true dialogue may occur) is compared to that between Socrates and his daimon; in the second, anticipating the concerns of one especially enlightening essay in *Saint Augustin et les Actes de Parole*, Chrétien argues for and elaborates an account of the "translation" which we must perform in order to hear this prior and originating call, and

[395] Chrétien, *The Call and the Response,* 43.
[396] Augustine, *Conf.* X.6.8.

equally in order to respond to it. In both cases, the insight, central to the entire argument of *The Call and the Response*, that the phenomenological structure of language and of existence according to "the call that … sends us into the world" is "only perceived" in our response to it, but that the call sets forth the terms of our response and so "alters" it, takes the initial form of a meditation on the psalmic thought, dear to Augustine, of the *sacrificium laudis*, the "sacrifice" of praise, which is at once the "gift" of praise and its immediate and definitive "injury and loss." In this regard, the thought of praise discloses an essential dimension of language and the voice: "it is intimately our own insofar as it reveals something to us about our own utterance and its meaning; but it does not belong to us since we are not the source of its light."[397] This invites, in a striking invocation of the entire Western philosophical parade, from Socrates to Malebranche to Kant, Fichte, Rousseau, Heidegger, in spite of acknowledged differences, a reflection on the inner voice as the site of irreducible alterity within the self in each of their thoughts.[398] For all its near omnipresence in the philosophical tradition, this inner voice raises a phenomenological problem for Chrétien. Given that this phenomenon is persistently identified as a *voice*, and not for example as an illumination or a simple sensation, the mode according to which it is given must in some way be analogous (even by means of a conceptually difficult analogy) to the voices which we hear on a daily and familiar basis, and so must come from "a being other than ourselves"; nevertheless, this voice

[397] Chrétien, *The Call and the Response,* 44.
[398] Chrétien, *The Call and the Response,* 45-6.

stubbornly appears in the tradition as "*immediate*" in us. But, as the hermeneutic phenomenologists will quickly object (and, following Ricoeur's commitments, as they will even invoke Augustine so to do), voices only speak in *words*, and thus in complex and particular formal *mediations*. This being the case, can the inner voice truly be transcendent, universal, and so subject to phenomenological investigation, or is it a simply local, particular and in the end even idiosyncratic manifestation?

To begin to respond to these admittedly thorny questions, Chrétien notes that some of the "most frequent and most precise questions" in a long debate amongst commentators devoted to the Platonic dialogues attempt to determine whether Socrates' *daimon* "could properly be said to have a 'voice'," or was a simple and rather crude metaphor for something like a "conscience."[399] But to set up these questions more programmatically, it is to Augustine that Chrétien turns, and most centrally to his *Soliloquies*, an early work, even the neologistic title of which, as he notes, raises the question of such an at once immanent and transcendent dialogue: is ever it truly possibly that *cum solis nobis loquimur*, can I in any defensible sense "talk only with myself," man to man?[400] And, in a passage which also intrigues Marion,[401] Augustine begins this literary dialogue with a prayer that leaves the specific natures of the answer to this question indeterminate: "*Ait mihi subito, sive ego ipse, sive alius quis extrinsecus, sive intrinsecus, nescio* ('suddenly someone speaks to me; whether this is I myself, or another exterior to me, or another interior to

[399] Chrétien, *The Call and the Response,* 47.
[400] Chrétien, *The Call and the Response,* 49, citing Augustine, *Soliloquies* XI.7.14.
[401] Cf. Marion, *Au Lieu De Soi* 46.

me, I do not know')."[402] This, well before the *Confessions* will formulate more famously the *magna quaestio mihi*, already raises and leaves unanswered the problem of the self and its particular form of existence or manifestation:

> To wonder whether it is myself or another who calls me, to wonder whether the implied alterity is external or internal, is basically to wonder who I am by asking myself how it is possible for me to be thus reached, and therefore to answer the call that is intimately addressed to me. The call that is sent to me makes me problematic to myself, uncertain of my boundaries and of my power. The question and the call are one, since the perplexity that regards its source is a perplexity that regards me.[403]

Even so, Chrétien finds fault in Augustine's early dialogue for its nature as "a silent and mute dialogue" which does not "enter into the puzzles of an inner voice," content as it is to leave Reason voiceless, or at least to refrain from explicitly thematizing Reason as being or having a *vox*. This is not to ascribe a naïve experientialism to Augustine on this front: Chrétien rightly notes that Augustine (and more directly Augustine's heirs, such as Hugh of St Victor) does elsewhere reflect, albeit critically, on the attribution to a post-lapsarian humanity of a "regime of immediacy in which God would speak directly to the soul in a pure inwardness." Though this might, Augustine speculates, have been available in Eden, such a disincarnate account of revelation via a purely inner voice is in fundamental discontinuity with the biblical tradition: Chrétien paraphrases an argument *contra Manicheos,* saying,

> Even if the call leads us back to our own spiritual intimacy, the world is where it must resonate for sinful humankind. No genuinely Christian thought could ever privilege an inner

[402] Chrétien, *The Call and the Response,* 48, citing Augustine, *Soliloquies* I.1.
[403] Chrétien, *The Call and the Response,* 48.

> voice over the chorus of God's witnesses: this would amount to substituting a private and solitary 'revelation' to the Revelation that founds the Church.[404]

But here, as elsewhere, Chrétien is concerned to dismantle any easy distinctions between the biblical and the Platonic tradition: Socrates' daimon, too, resists the esoteric and the private, as Plutarch and Proclus affirm,[405] preferring to be manifest by resonating only in the public agora of philosophy. Such is indicative for Chrétien that, for the Platonic tradition, philosophy is not only essentially incarnate and public, but in fact calls into question at the most radical level the static account of the self on which any esotericism necessarily relies: for the Platonists, he summarizes, "there is no inner voice except through some intimate alteration, which constitutes genuine interiority. To listen is to be opened to the other and transformed by the other at our most intimate core. Intimacy, in these ways of thinking, is neither escape nor shelter, but rather the place of broader exposure" (63).

In order to establish that Augustine shares in this tradition, both of the voice as alteration and of the "purification" which must occur prior to and through this voice, Chrétien certainly might well have appealed to numerous passages of the *Confessions*, or perhaps more easily he could have turned to the *De magistro.* But, perhaps in order to insist, however subtly, that his participation in the Platonic tradition does not facilely represent any kind of corruption of Christian theology, he turns his analysis to the very core of Christian theology -- not only to the Bible, but to the first Christian

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[404] Chrétien, *The Call and the Response,* 50.

[405] Cf. Plato, Apology 33B; Plutarch, *De genio socratis* 588C-D; Proclus, *Alcibiades I*, trans. William O'Neill (The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1965).

theologian, John the Baptist, and to Augustine's sermons and meditations on this figure who testifies only to Christ, and to himself only indirectly, as *ego vox*, "I am a voice" crying out in the wilderness.[406] The philosophical theme of voice is thus central to the Augustinian thought on John, and with it, the relationship of my voice to all preceding voices, including the Eternal voice:

> The immutable Word sent these voices, and after so many voices preceding it, the same Word descended into its own chariot, in its very own voice, in its flesh. Collect therefore into one voice as it were all of the voices that preceded the Word, and attribute them to the person of John. It is as though he carried in himself the symbol of all these voices: in and of himself, he was the sacred and mystical personification of these voices; and if he properly named himself the Voice, this is because he was the sign and representation of all the others.[407]

This invites a rapprochement of the themes of *The Call and the Response* with those of *The Unforgettable and the Unhoped For*, showing that these reflections are to some extent inseparable:

> Even having come, the Word needs still and needs always to be announced by new voices (…) [The human voice] is truly itself and accomplished as voice only by being both defeated and exceeded. Defeated and exceeded by the immemorial past, the immemorial past of the Word that it announces and whose fullness it bears, defeated all over again by the imminent future, but also by the eschatological future that rips it asunder and makes it cry out" in the wilderness.[408]

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406 That even this self-identification is drawn from the voice of another, that of Isaiah, is an intriguing and significant fact which is not lost on Chrétien; cf. Chrétien, *The Call and the Response,* 63.

407 Chrétien, *The Call and the Response,* 64, citing Augustine, *Sermo* 288.

408 Chrétien, *The Call and the Response,* 65.

This perpetual annunciation, which Chrétien compares fruitfully to the task of the translator,[409] is obstinately incarnate: it is inseparable from a transcendent Logos, but only manifests itself to my self in the voice which resonates in my ear and in my larynx. To be seized by this call is "the condition of my humanity and therefore of my human corporeity, of the possibility in me of bearing spirit throughout my whole body by bearing my voice. The most 'empirical' aspect of the call is also its most 'transcendental'";[410] this structure, at root that of the Incarnation, is a primary of human experience. But to see it as simply reducible to human existence, synonymous with it or simultaneous to it, is to lose it entirely. "We continue to hear [the call] in our own voice, as everyone does, by *taking* up speech, without ever believing that we *are* speech, lest indeed it be lost." And to recognize the call in our response, which it initially makes possible and continually alters at the most fundamental level, is to see it as formally indistinguishable from a gift, or from beauty, either of which, as Augustine affirms and expounds, we can only love by affirming its alterity to our (interior or embodied) selves. We love them, if we love them at all, only *late*: "Testing and experiencing itself, my voice already has a past, is already late relative to the word, which is why, when it finally speaks, it will never be through with speech."[411]

The final essay of *The Call and the Response*, an exposition of Aristotle on touch as the sense which forms "the first hearing" of the call, the

[409] Chrétien, *The Call and the Response,* 77-82.
[410] Chrétien, *The Call and the Response,* 81.
[411] Chrétien, *The Call and the Response,* 82.

founding of all the other corporeal senses, drives all of the foregoing reflections deeply into the texture of the flesh itself. Augustine's absolute absence from these pages renders a sensitive rendering of Chrétien's phenomenological reading of the *De Anima* only questionably relevant to the present argument. But if we may be permitted just one remark, we can quickly note that, ever the orator, Augustine orders his lists carefully, retaining as last those senses which he holds to be most important: in the list of the spiritual senses evoked above, after light, voice, fragrance and food comes the embrace of touch,[412] and in the famous passage which begins "Late have I loved you," the particular manifestations of the "ever ancient, ever new" *pulchritudo* which Augustine eulogizes culminate in that of touch: "You touched me, and I am set on fire to attain the peace which is yours."[413]. This suggests, admittedly without fully generating, a potentially fertile ground for dialogue between Augustine and the Aristotelian tradition.[414]

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412 Augustine, *Conf.* X.6.8.

413 Augustine, *Conf.* X.27.38.

414 Insofar as Aquinas takes up the arguments of the *De Anima*, this dialogue can point squarely in the direction of Eucharistic tasting as a primary form of touch: on this, cf. John Milbank and Catherine Pickstock, *Truth in Aquinas* (London: Routledge, 2000). Such an account is moreover not absent from *Confessions* X, with the subtle but unmissable Eucharistic dimension of the "spiritual senses."

Chrétien's engagement with Augustine is marked primarily by a love of his words and by attention to his voice

As noted above, my approach to *St Augustine and the Acts of Speech*[415] will differ somewhat from my approach to the two earlier works. On the one hand, since its subject matter is more locally focused, centering on a very particular theme (that of speech) and one particular figure (Augustine) where the previous works drew more broadly on both philosophical and theological sources, this portion of the present chapter will necessarily be more attentive to Chrétien specifically as *philologist*, in the rich etymological sense of this term, as one who loves and attends to the very words of Augustine, letting them shape his argument even more directly than they have in *The Unforgettable and the Unhoped for* and *The Call and the Response*. On the other hand, the proximity in time and subject matter to Marion's *Au Lieu De Soi* will permit a more strictly comparative argumentative strategy, although again this will remain for the most part implicit. To achieve both of these goals, my methodology will be more deliberately architectonic; rather than picking several representative chapters, and trying to convey a sense of the argument of the whole of the work through them (or worse, attempting to cherry-pick

415 The arguments of this monograph have significant overlap with those of *The Ark of Speec*h, from whose pages, moreover, Augustine is far from absent. For reasons of economy, I here abstain from any significant discussion of that book, which retains its charm and its rigor, only noting that in its five essays, which (very characteristically, as we are beginning to see) skip with little explanation from analysis of Genesis to that of Aristotle or Proclus. For what it's worth in terms of the discussion of Chrétien's breadth of Augustinian reading, the great majority of Augustinian citations in *The Ark of Speech* draw from the *enarrationes in Psalmos*, with more occasional and brief yet worthwhile discussions of *De civitate dei, Confessions, De trinitate and* several more minor texts.

the highlights of each chapter), I will present some of the key questions regarding speech (which are often quite similar to those asked by Marion a propos of the self) that motivate Chrétien's argument, and attempt to show the manner in which he answers these questions (and not attend too directly to the answers themselves). It is an approach Chrétien himself would like -- his aesthetic works (cf. *Corps á corps* or *L'Antiphonaire de la nuit*[416]) practice the altogether phenomenological art of focusing on but one corner of a mosaic, or on a single square inch of a landscape, to see what a few organizing details will reveal of the logic and form of the entire work.

What is initially the most striking difference between Marion's and Chrétien's monographs on Augustine emerges in the very form of the chapter titles: in *Au Lieu De Soi*, Marion's titles take the form of disjunctives between an Augustinian theme (in Latin) and a proposed translation thereof into phenomenological categories ("*Veritas* or the saturated phenomenon," for example, or "*Confessio* or the reduction"), where in *Actes de Parole*, Chrétien has chosen simple infinitives describing this or that act of the voice (so one finds chapters on such predictable topics as "Teaching" and "Baptizing," but also the more surprising "Eating and Drinking" and "Belching"). One could easily read too much into Marion's rhetorical and philosophical decision; it is not the case that his disjunctives imply a contrast between *veritas* and the saturated phenomenon, nor even (as we have seen in Chapter 3 above) that Marion prefers his terminology to that of Augustine. However, Chrétien's less flexible chapter titling in fact gives him greater freedom to attend to

[416] Paris: Eds. De Minuit, 1997 and Eds. De L'Herne, 1990, respectively.

many different aspects (the role of each infinitive within the canon of Augustine's thought as well as the broader way in which Augustine's reflections on each can inform our own). What comes to the surface of Chrétien's book, given the sensitivity of his presentation of "a phenomenology of speech following the connecting thread of its acts," is a portrait of Augustine, which attends to Augustine not only as a resource for philosophical reflection and argumentation, but also as a preacher, a bishop, an exegete and (above all) one who *speaks* in forums both public and familiar.[417] And so although Chrétien's Augustine is admittedly still read through sometimes Lutheran eyes (particularly, and unsurprisingly, Kierkegaardian eyes), he still surfaces as a richer and a fuller Augustine than the figure that Heidegger and Marion treat, a living character in a tradition which is equally full of life.

Chrétien makes a clear and careful analysis of the extent to which Augustine anticipates phenomenological concerns

This tradition works, as it does for Marion, in two directions: looking forward from the Augustinian vantage point, Chrétien gestures towards Augustine's role in the phenomenological tradition, and looking backward, he considers the relationship of the hellenic and the biblical philosophical traditions in Augustine's thought and life. We here first consider the relatively few explicit movements towards phenomenology

[417] Chrétien, *Actes de Parole,* 8.

proper. In the first of these, the Heideggerean description of questioning as 'the piety of thought'[418] is for Chrétien emblematic of Augustine's rigor, invoked rather casually with regard to Augustine's disinterest in making light of the question as to what God was doing 'before' he created the heaven and the earth.[419] Although the invocation appears to be offhand, it is well placed; Chrétien does not fail to mention that Augustine's approach is not followed by the entire Christian tradition, with Luther, for example, citing favorably the joke which Augustine only mentions in order to reject. The implication is subtle but clear: Luther, whom Heidegger holds, at various points in his career, in high esteem, fails in this questioning piety exactly where Augustine succeeds. Augustine's willingness to admit ignorance in the face of difficult questions makes possible a "brilliant meditation" on time, where to dismiss the question as ridiculous, as "proud or violent," amounts to a "slipping away from the responsibility of speech."[420] In a similar manner, Chrétien claims an Augustinian heritage for the Heideggerean thought of listening as active, as "an event." Heidegger says, "As long as we listen only to words as the expression of someone who speaks, we do not yet listen, we do not listen absolutely. Never will we arrive in this way at truly having heard someone. When, then, have we heard? We have heard when we *make a part* of what is said to us (*wenn wir den Zugesprochenen gehören*)."[421] This active and nearly

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418 Martin Heidegger, "La question de la technique" in *Essais et conferences,* trad. Preau (Paris, 1958), p. 48; collected in *Basic Writings,* ed. David Krell (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1993), as *The Question Concerning Technology,* 321ff.
419 Chrétien, *Actes de Parole,* 19, citing Augustine, *Conf.* XI.12.14.
420 Chrétien, *Actes de Parole,* 19-20.
421 Heidegger, "Question concerning technology," 259-60.

agonic dimension of listening, in which every act of listening on my part, far from being a mere sensory perception or the imprinting of words or thoughts on my otherwise passive mind, is only taken up by my re-articulating that to which I listen, and is indeed only taken up *in order* that I might respond to it, is of course a structure familiar to readers of *The Call and the Response*; the citation of Heidegger in this chapter of *Actes de parole,* sandwiched as it is between meditations on *De doctrina christiana* and on lines from Augustine's sermons, serves to underline the vivid resonance of that work with the Augustinian corpus. The same can be said for the very similar quotation from "What is a thing?" in *Actes de Parole*'s chapter on teaching:

> The student 'does not begin to learn except when he experiences what he takes as that which is already properly his. There alone is the true learning, where one takes what one already has, that is, *is given to oneself*, and where this is experienced as such. Teaching thus will say nothing other than letting others learn, that is, mutually standing to learn. Learning is more difficult than teaching, for only he who can truly learn – and only so long as he can do this – he alone is capable of teaching.[422]

This thought, perhaps more easily linked to the Platonic thought of anamnesis, is for Chrétien most obviously relevant in a discussion of the Augustinian doctrine of Christ as the Truth, and thus as the true and only teacher in every student. Finally, lest these attributions appear arbitrary, Chrétien makes a brief acknowledgement of Heidegger's own lectures of Augustine,[423] noting the centrality of the *confessio* as an integral and essential

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422 Chrétien, *Actes de Parole,* 111, citing Heidegger, "Qu'est-ce qu'une chose?" trans. Reboul-Tasmania (Paris, 1971), p. 85; English translation in *What is a thing?* Washington, D.C.: Regnery Publishing, 1968).

423 Discussed above, Ch. 2.

part of the process of becoming a *quaestio* to oneself in Heidegger's reading. For Heidegger and for Chrétien, the indispensable point, worth much argument with the (nearly always unnamed) "commentators," is that the *quaestio mihi* is not a natural or an inevitable stance: even if one could imagine other ways in which a person could problematize herself, it remains that the double confession of sin and of praise is the mechanism by which Augustine arrives at this decisive formulation.[424] Chrétien's overall assessment of the phenomenological tradition's relationship is thus almost exclusively Heideggerean in its scope, and largely positive in its determination. He departs from both this scope and this determination only once, in reflecting on Husserl's somewhat different tracing of the Augustinian impulse to thematize time by means of the song.[425] The difference here is slight, in that Husserl, who, as we have seen, opens *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness* with an "homage" to Augustine, indisputably bears the latter's influence, not only in reflecting on the temporality of melodies, but in making of music in general a paradigm of the structure of temporality. But the difference, or really the betrayal, of Augustine, remains important in Chrétien's eyes to note: for Husserl, it is enough to hear a song in order to experience and to meditate on the flux of temporality within the consciousness, whereas for Augustine, in line with the previous reflections on listening and learning, we must not only be gripped by the song, but actively grip it back and respond to it -- it is not only a matter of hearing the

[424] Chrétien, *Actes de Parole,* 131-2.
[425] Chrétien, *Actes de Parole,* 150ff.

song of time, but more centrally of joining our voice in the choral song (which, moreover, is an image by which Chrétien will frequently signify his conception of philosophy).[426]

Chrétien's account of Platonism in *Actes de Parole* does not live up to the hermeneutical principles he has outlined, nor to his more generous and attentive approaches in his earlier books and essays

We may perhaps best illustrate this claim by turning now to the choral relationship which Augustine bears to both Hellenic and biblical figures of philosophy in Chrétien's estimation. With regard to the first, Chrétien resists the impulse to construct a typological account of Augustine's Platonism (or Stoicism or Pythagoreanism…). Nevertheless, it remains possible to generalize that for Chrétien, Augustine is generally aligned with the thought of (unsurprisingly) Plato and (more surprisingly) Heraclitus, and generally, if more subtly, distant from that of Plotinus. Both Plato and Heraclitus figure in *Actes de Parole* in a way analogous to what we have just seen regarding Heidegger: for the most part, their role is that of the casual citation, the broad thematic comparison, or the textual or accidental encounter. For example, in Chrétien's treatment of speech as edible and as nourishing, he does not neglect to mention that there is some Platonic precedent in the discussion in the *Phaedrus* of the truth as nourishment;[427] much like this is his evocation of *Laches* and Socrates' description of the ideal

426 Cf. e.g. *The Call and the Response* 29-32.
427 Chrétien, *Actes de Parole,* 38.

musician as the one who is "is not content to set the most beautiful harmony on his lyre or on some frivolous instrument, but who, in the reality of his life, sets in agreement his speeches and his acts" in order to demonstrate philosophical precedent for Augustine's thought of existence, and particular ethical existence, as musical.[428] Heraclitus is often evoked in a similar manner,[429] and it is not clear how often Chrétien intends these evocations to be merely a demonstration of similarity for the benefit of the intellectually curious, and how often there is a more defensive apparatus at play, designed to protect Augustine from the charge of anti-intellectualism, or simply to define him as a philosopher worthy of philosophical attention. In either event, the comparisons of Augustine to Plotinus are in the mode of a sharp contrast. While Chrétien does not unequivocally deny a relationship, and even one of similarity and influence, between the two, and indeed he need not, as his meditations elsewhere[430] on Plotinus are more careful and more generous than are some of the frightened caricatures thereof which permeate the philosophical and theological world, but his emphasis is nonetheless unflaggingly on the ruptures which Augustine makes with Plotinus. These ruptures include the rejection of a brute Plotinian apophaticism as "pusillanimous," the thought of the *interior intimo meo* as a dialectical progression, and thus to some extent a rejection, of Plotinian anthropology, the rejection of a Plotinian instrumental account of the body, and, most interestingly for our purposes, the "perfect and irreversible separation" of the

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428 Chrétien, *Actes de Parole,* 154.

429 Chrétien, *Actes de Parole,* 28 and 193.

430 For example "*La beauté dit-elle adieu*?" in *L'Arche de Parole*, 105-149.

biblical metaphysics of creation from the thought of form and matter purportedly present in Plotinus.[431] This last, occurring in the chapter on "Recalling," discloses more than the others the over-argument, disappointing from such a thinker who so often presents shrewd and convincing readings, rather than exaggerated cartoons, of the Platonic tradition: the biblical account of verbal creation, and especially Augustine's reflections on it from the *Confessions* to *De genesi ad litteram*, has seemed to many (both supporters and detractors of a loosely defined 'Platonism') to support, to include, or to reform a Plotinian metaphysics, and Chrétien's failure or refusal to describe what facet or passage of the *Enneads* is allegedly displaced or subverted by this account is a failure of argument, and a failure of hospitality.

Instead, Chrétien's emphasis on biblical (rather than Platonic) sources underscores his understanding of Augustine as a resolutely scriptural philosopher

But where Chrétien has failed, in this instance, in practice is precisely where he has succeeded in principle: the elaboration of a structure in which philosophy, understood here metonymically as the Greek language, can be welcomed into Christian revelation is a commitment which Chrétien rightly espouses (the reader need hardly be reminded of the instructive contrast here with Marion and his flat refusal of anything like this: "*Saint Augustin ne parle pas le langue 'grec'*"). In what follows, I will present the ways in which

[431] Chrétien, *Actes de Parole,* 96, 220, 266, 213ff., respectively.

Chrétien's Augustine has used biblical figures to elaborate a quasi-phenomenology of speech, this being made possible at the theoretical level by Chrétien's incisive thought of translation, according to which any speech (including philosophical speech) is necessarily translated from one idiosyncratic language of thought into another, both in the passing of thought into speech and in that of speech into the listener's language. In a rather sanguine rhetorical flourish, Chrétien closes the chapter devoted to expanding this thesis by reminding the Christian tradition that it, less than any other, needs to be afraid of such linguistic, conceptual or existential translation, being founded as it is on the teachings of one who immediately and permanently expresses himself in a foreign language: they

> …only know the speeches of Christ in Greek, that is, in a translation, and in a translation of which God did not want us to have the original … At the Ascension, it is not only his glorious body which has disappeared from our eyes, it is also the intonation of his voice, as well as the flesh of his speeches, in the language which he spoke. This is irreversible. His speeches come back to life in Greek, in a translation which, for the faithful, is forever the original of the Spirit.[432]

That the New Testament (and, for Augustine, the most authoritative translation of the Hebrew Scriptures) were written and preserved only and originally in the language of philosophy bears further thought. But such is not Chrétien's project, at least not in *Actes de Parole,*[433] which restricts itself to several exegeses, inspired by Augustine's own, of particular biblical passages or *figurae:* to these we now briefly turn.

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[432] Chrétien, *Actes de Parole,* 74.

[433] He does gesture further in this direction in the collection of essays, *Sous le regard de la Bible* (Paris: Bayard, 2008).

Chrétien's treatment of the Augustinian reading of the Bible is sometimes difficult to disentangle from his own treatment of the Bible; both are marked by a remarkable ingenuity and a flexibility of approach. This is due at least in part to Chrétien's thoughtful sensitivity to Augustine's continual reflection on the concrete practice of reading. It is perhaps no accident that, of the few English books on Augustine which he cites, Brian Stock's *Augustine the Reader*,[434] which has not received the attention it is due in the Anglophone world, gets Chrétien's careful attention and approbation: in it, Chrétien has found a meticulous deliberation of the various modes of reading (of Scripture, but also of the world and even of God) which Augustine both authorizes and practices. Chrétien is particularly receptive to the Augustinian insight of the Bible as a hospitable text, worthy of the trust that the most difficult passages can, with the attention the time that they invite, emerge to be seen as the most rewarding for thought.[435] Indeed this is of a piece with the insight, acknowledged but hardly elaborated by Chrétien, that a text may, without recourse to deliberate allegorical reading, bear multiple "literal" significations:[436] this, which as we will see more deeply in the final chapter of the present essay, is for Augustine one of the most important shades of meaning present in the account in Genesis of creation's fertility.[437] But the difficulties which the interpreter encounters, faced with

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434 Brian Stock, *Augustine the Reader* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press 1998).
435 Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 56.
436 Chrétien, *Actes de Parole,* 178.
437 Cf. *Conf*. XII in its entirety, and of course *De genesi ad litteram*, whose very title displays the at times surprising elasticity with which Augustine applies the latter term.

such a rapidly multiplying fecundity of meaning, are not to be conceived as a "veil," or else as a challenge external to the reader: as Chrétien remarks with regard to the Apostle John, here functioning as a paradigm of all biblical philosophy, to speak forth an interpretation of the text is only possible for him who rests most comfortably on the bosom of the Word.[438] The difficulty of reading, even of reading the Bible, is not separable from the *quaestio mihi*, the interrogation of the self, although due to his insistent focus on the linguistic interpermeability of self and world, this inseparability is not for Chrétien nearly as interesting as it may have been in the more exclusively subjective hands of Husserl or Marion. With this in mind, we can here examine Chrétien's interrogations of biblical figures, beginning with those which he uses most locally, in order to demonstrate or illustrate particular facets of particular acts of speech, and progressing to those which he considers, in their most general aspects, as the most disclosive of a proper phenomenology of speech. Lest the former, more local class be seen as relatively unimportant within Chrétien's thought, let it be remembered how deeply certain biblical phrases (most evidently, those taken from the psalms) impact the shape and flow of the text of the *Confessions*: though direct and explicit exegetical interaction with the psalms, in a mode similar to that applied to Genesis in the final two books, is absent from the *Confessions*, we needn't look as far as the *Enarrationes* or the *Sermones* for serious reflection on the psalms. In actuality, in a different modality, the burden of the *Confessions* is largely to exposit the psalms through Augustine's life, if not through his

[438] Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 61-2

considerable exegetical talent. Such ought to remind us that, amongst various modes of reading Scripture, the "literal" or scientific is not, for Augustine or for Chrétien, necessarily the most revealing or satisfying, and the brief and offhand invocation of a scriptural figure or story can, in its very familiarity and peripheral ease, be well worth our attention. Such is the case, for example, with the figure of Adam as an exemplification of the exhortation to 'exult with trembling':[439] this phrase's appearance in the psalms, and especially its application[440] to the pre-lapsarian Adam, suggests for Chrétien that this description, of a fearful and unstable joy in the presence of God, divulges an essential dimension of humanity. Similarly, Chrétien notes that the Johannine description of John the Baptist as "rejoicing with joy (*gaudio gaudet*)"[441] is not to be taken in isolation from its context, in which case it would be a rather precious rhetorical flourish at best; it is rather to be understand as dependent on the status of "standing and listening" which precedes it in the gospel -- to rejoice with joy is in a relation of apposition to "standing and listening," and standing, literally and physically, is itself for Chrétien dependent on a prior phenomenological stance of listening.[442] This sort of reading, rather casual in its tone, even if we must acknowledge that a grammatical approach (still less an "historical" approach, as this is generally known) neither supports nor negates it,

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439 Ps 2.11, discussed briefly in *Actes de Parole* 130-1, and with a more sustained attention in *Le regard de l'amour* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 2000), 55 ff.

440 Augustine, *De genesi ad litteram* XI.17.24.

441 John 3.29.

442 *Tractates on the Gospel of John* XIII.12. This reflection opens, and is sustained throughout, Ch. 2 of *Actes de Parole* (pp. 25-35).

inarguably illustrates the Augustinian thought of joy, and without question is inspired by Augustine's own readings of Scripture. Similar points could be made of Chrétien's remarks on Job as a figure of ontological humility,[443] on Lazarus as an illustration of confession as a "resurrection" of speech,[444] on the Lukan parables of request as a moral and a phenomenological exhortation towards persistence in attention,[445] and perhaps the most sharply, because it is one of the more entertainingly unpredictable moments in *Actes de Parole*, on the Levitical dietary proscription of eating non-chewing animals as a positive assessment of "chewing" as an act of speech.[446] He will make similar remarks, with little shift in tone, regarding Christ as a character on this phenomenological stage -- for example, in his silence in the manger or on the cross, as an example (indeed the founding paradigm) of silence as a particularly plentiful act of speech.[447]

None of this is meant to imply that Chrétien is insensitive or inattentive to Augustine's more prolonged and systematic readings of Scripture, as for example when he draws attention to the Augustinian account of Mary and Martha as *figurae* of the active and contemplative lives.[448] Chrétien notes that, in lieu of the more traditional rendering of Christ's words to Martha as favoring the contemplative life (here figured in the "one thing needful") to the active, Augustine's approach rejects the path of

[443] Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 175.
[444] Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 124.
[445] Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 188-9.
[446] Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 51.
[447] Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 101ff.
[448] Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 31ff.

reading the two sisters as "two possibilities of existence or faith between which we must, here and now, decide," positing Mary as a figure of eternal life, a contemplation in which we can participate only to the extent that we, like Martha, are actively hospitable to the images of Christ which we encounter in our temporal life. Even here, then, in a more historically based reading, Chrétien's attention to the Augustinian scripture has in its peripheral vision the more properly existential dimension of the characters of the gospel, and of their words. This is even more the case in two references made to Peter. In the first, Augustine interprets Christ's rebuke of Peter, just on the heels of his confession of Christ as the Messiah, as signifying that Peter's words can as easily come from God as they can come from himself, in either case having existential import: "It is really a matter of life and death. As soon as he speaks from himself, Peter immediately falls."[449] In the second, Augustine contrasts the Petrine denial of Christ during the Passion with the aforementioned confession of faith: the former makes evident that Peter's own words come from lies and from cowardice, but the latter displays the wholly spiritual power of speech to testify to the truth, and to transform Peter, in his entire person, into this testimony.[450] Chrétien remarks the compatibility of this reading with the Pauline interrogation, dear to Marion: "What do you have that you have not received?" (1 Cor. 4.7). Correspondingly, in a very different passage of Scripture, Augustine finds an apt metaphor for and illustration of speech in the figure of Jacob (in

[449] Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 117.
[450] Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 145.

Augustine's reading, *Israel*, which he translates (following Jerome) as *videns deum*. Unsurprisingly, for the author of *La parole blessée* (perhaps Chrétien's most widely read piece, at least in the English-speaking world, due to its inclusion in the Janicaud collection)[451], Augustine's exposition of Jacob as blessed to the precise extent that he is wounded in wrestling with the stranger warrants at least a brief meditation. This he accomplishes, following Augustine closely, by comparing it with the other blessing which Jacob obtains violently: that of Isaac, blessing his son: in both cases, Augustine declines to evaluate Jacob's acceptance of the blessings on a moral register (in the first instance, by means of violence; in the second, by means of deceit), opting instead to listen to what these stories reveal about the blessing proper: it falls to Isaac "not to bless his sons by recognizing them, but to recognize them by blessing them."[452] The act of speech under consideration here, namely blessing, founds and sets the conditions of the secondary act of recognition; this biblical philosophy of speech likewise only reveals itself to the reader who is prepared to receive the story as a blessing first.

The above examples have shown the degree to which Chrétien appreciates the phenomenological weight of the words and figures of Scripture. But one more class of biblical texts remains for our discussion, that in which speech is itself the subject of the action. Of these, in the beginning it is necessary to address the theme of speech in creation, evoked above with respect to the fertility of creation and the multiplicity of

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451 *Phenomenology and the "Theological Turn: The French Debate* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2000), 147-175.

452 Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 178, citing Augustine, *Conf.* X.34.52.

meanings. Chrétien deals with this under the type of paradox, or of circularity: in speech, since its first biblical manifestation appears in a creative mode, "there is thus a multiplicity of signs possible for one same sense, and a multiplicity of sense possible for the same signs."[453] Strictly speaking, Chrétien's gloss here on *Confessions* XIII.24.36 applies first in the intellectual sphere, since it is a matter of meanings; however, Chrétien never invokes 'sense' without a purpose, and the immediate context (a discussion of fertility and sexual generativity) makes it clear that this intellectual and linguistic multiplication is a metaphor for a more primary corporeal generation: signs and senses alike are productive and reproductive. A similar circularity between the intellectual and the sensory is at play in the Augustinian Eden: the first page of *Actes de Parole*, and indeed the first citation of Augustine made therein, invokes Adam's manual labour as a "questioning" of the potentiality of the roots, shrubs and plants presented to him in Eden. Chrétien here allows his earlier focus, in *L'Arche de Parole*,[454] on Adam's work as primarily *naming* the animals to be supplemented by the more acutely Augustinian description of Adamic reason as manual and interrogative:[455] but in both books, he incisively displays an insight that philosophical elaboration on Genesis' words about Adam are a primary locus, and a rich starting point, for Christian anthropology. But it is not enough: neither Chrétien nor Augustine are content with an Adamic anthropology, nor an Adamic account of speech, and this is not simply due

453 Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 180.
454 Chrétien, *L'Arche*, 2-9, and *passim*.
455 Cf. Augustine, *De genesi ad litteram* VIII.8.16, and below, Chap. 5.

to some real or imagined pessimism with regard to the fall. Chrétien's reflections on Babel, and on the transformation from one language to diverse languages, demonstrates this well: although, in his chapter on "Translating," he draws chiefly on *De civitate dei* to meditate on the diversity of speech as a punishment, Chrétien does not rest with an undemanding binary between the goodness of simplicity in Edenic speech on the one hand, and on the other the evil of plurality in Babelic speech. Rather, he exhibits the catholicity of speech presented by Augustine's treatment of the narrative of Pentecost:[456] this inventive comparison of Augustine's treatment of Babel with that of Pentecost makes of Babel an original glossolalia, a sort of *felix culpa* of speech: "That all human languages can translate the speech of God, and produce it by the human efforts of translation: this multiplies the blessing instead of fragmenting it."[457]

The link which entangles Adam with the church of Pentecost is, of course, Christ, and no Christian philosophy of *parole* could hesitate to invoke Christ as *logos*. Chrétien does not fail in this regard: one has the considerations one would expect, on for example the paradoxical or oxymoronic aspects of the Word being silent or silenced,[458] or on the Word inviting us to pray his words and make them our own.[459] But here, too, Chrétien is on guard against making of Augustine an excessively Christocentric thinker: attention to Christ, and particularly to Christ's life

456 Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 66ff.
457 Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 71.
458 Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 101.
459 Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 185.

described as a "cry,"[460] directs attention away from Christ. The structure of the cry operates in a nearly dialectic manner: "Yes, he has left, and look, he is here."[461] The 'cry' which Christ's life presents is, in Augustine's eyes, first a cry encouraging the recipient of the cry to "return to our heart (*ut redeamus ad cor*)" but (in keeping with Chrétien's insistence, shared with Marion, that the *interior intimo meo* always be read with its accompanying *superior summo meo*) this "return" has nothing to do with a benign introspection. Instead, the cry which occasions it breaks any quiet solitude which could facilitate introspection to begin with. When the cry overlaps perfectly with God, as it does in Augustine's imaginative reading of the life of Christ from conception to ascension, the divine cry need not come from one of the predictable sources, whether it be mystical experience or biblical text: "in the life of the Word, all is word, all speaks, all bursts in a radically new sense."[462]

Chrétien makes a counter-intuitive connection between silence and communal being

In the foregoing consideration of the relationship in Chrétien's handling of Augustine's participation in or foreshadowing of the phenomenological, Platonist and biblical traditions, I have run the risk of tending to the artificially abstract. This has been necessary, but the contours of *Actes de Parole* render it equally necessary to correct this tendency, taking as

460 In *Conf.* IV.11.16, a passage which Chrétien invokes no fewer than twice in *Actes de Parole* as "astonishing" (163, 220-1).
461 *Conf.* IV.12.19, cited in *Actes de Parole* 221.
462 Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 163.

they do both their methodological starting questions (what is the voice of a particular human being capable of?) and their subject matter (when compared to Heidegger, and to a lesser extent Marion, Chrétien's analysis draws much more frequently from the various *sermones* and *enarrationes* which Augustine delivered *in voce sua*) from Augustine considered not as a representative of doctrines, whether these be philosophical or theological, but as a discrete, particular, locally and temporally bound man: in short, not an Augustine of Augustinianisms as much as an Aurelius Augustinus. Chrétien approaches this with a considerable amount of care, wisely skeptical of any "psychologizing" impulse[463] to try to explain any of Augustine's preaching or thought exclusively and exhaustively in terms of, for example, his relationship to Monica. The moral or psychological approach to Augustine, which is still de rigueur in much of the Anglo-American world, in fact for Chrétien obscures a real and really embodied portrait of Augustine, to whom such an approach would undoubtedly have been foreign, tending or pretending to portray only his inner life with little regard for his public existence. The whole of *Actes de Parole* of course aims to portray a sort of meta-Augustinian thought of speech, relying as it does on Augustine's speeches about speeches; only now and then does Chrétien's analysis drop down from this reflexive level to make comments on the context and tone of

463 Such a skepticism appears to Chrétien to be especially applicable when we consider those Augustinian teachings which on the surface seem to be 'moral' doctrines but which upon further thought bear phenomenological or existential import. Such is the case for example with Augustine's career-long preoccupation with *lying* as not simply an act but a mode and attitude of being: cf. Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 113-120, and similar warnings on 16, 52, 69, 81, 95, 130, 138, 147n.3.

these speeches themselves, and on what these can communicate of Augustine's historical self. Of these, the most important for Chrétien , and that to which he returns most frequently[464] is the wistful or regretful tonality with which Augustine will insist that he wishes he could more frequently be silent. Chrétien , whose thought especially in *The Call and the Response* and *The Ark of Speech* has persistently identified and emphasized silence, listening and reading as not only paradoxically forms of speech, but as the forms of speech which render possible the speeches which more naturally occur to us, is keenly aware of this seeming irony: that Augustine, one of the most prolific writers and speakers of the ancient world, whose "oral oeuvre" (Chrétien's term for the even-today growing number of transcriptions of Augustine's speeches and sermons, which also often record the responses of his audiences) surpasses that of any other, will frequently lament that his post as bishop forces him to speak more often than he can listen, and to write more often than he can read. This irony has, however, a nearly dialectical resolution, and one which lies close to the core of Chrétien's phenomenology of speech: the more Augustine speaks, the more he is aware of the limits of his speech, and thus the less authority he presumes. This dimension of speech, as the famous exhortation of *De doctrina christiana* puts it, will make a speaker (*dictor*) only from a listener and a prayer (*orator*),[465] and with regard to the divine speech, has an egalitarianizing impact on the relationship between the speaker and his audience. Chrétien invokes in this regard Augustine's

[464] Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 27, 54, and 91-2.
[465] Augustine, *De doctrina christiana* IV.25, 27.

memorable description of himself and his audience as *condiscipuli*.[466] The participatory element here could be easily missed -- even Augustine's physical standing in the pulpit depends on both his and his audience's standing in the truth, and participating, by listening and responding, in Christ as the Word: thus Chrétien quotes a sermon saying that "if Christ were now silent, Scripture would not speak. The reader goes up to the tribune, and he is not silent. The preacher speaks, if he speaks in truth, it is Christ who speaks. If Christ were silent, I myself would not be able to say this to you. And he has not put silence in your mouth: for when you sing all the time, it is he who speaks."[467] This reflection on a speaking silence (and the desire for it) as the paradigmatic way of imagining the historical Augustine reaches its culmination in Chrétien's account in the Ostia narrative.[468] Chrétien rather dismissively eschews the numerous attempts to place the *visio* which Augustine and Monica share in the context of mystic visions or Platonic ascents, calling our sole attention to the prayer to silence which begins the account: "If anyone can silence (*sileat*) the tumult of the flesh, silence the images of the earth and the waters and the air, silence even the heavens, and if the soul also in the self were silenced, and surpassed by not thinking any more of itself, silenced the songs and the visions of the imagination…" And in keeping with the persistent contention that silence need not itself be silent, Chrétien argues: "For Augustine, this silence becomes their silence in us, and our silences also, an empty welcoming which is the space of resonance for a

[466] Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 28 and 108ff.
[467] Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 34, citing Augustine, *Sermo* 17.8.
[468] Augustine, *Conf.* IX.10.24.

higher speech."[469] Instead of or in spite of the more common intellectual accents on Ostia's ascent, Chrétien's re-telling of the ascent is one which passes through silence to this higher speech, which "we must without end try to say, though it cannot be altogether said."[470] Such a restless silence is, as intimated above, present only in bodies -- both in the individual bodies which we comprise and in the social and ecclesial body of Christ. Chrétien's Augustine is thus a theoretician as much of the speaking body as of the silent mind, and his account of the real voice and sonority which is present in the body and in bodies gives a new, if indirect, rendering of Augustine's thought of the role which corporeality plays in speech.

This arises first, and most strikingly, in a series of brief chapters (3-5) in which Chrétien explicates and meditates on the Augustinian usage of eating and drinking, chewing and belching as acts of speech. Although Chrétien claims to be reading Augustine as speaking of them literally and physically, it is sufficient to read them as particularly acute metaphors for the ingestion, rumination and re-issuing of speech, so long as one does not dismiss them as purely psychological due to an embarrassment of their supposed crudity;[471] even their use as metaphors would be enough to safeguard the corporeality of Augustine's speech. Of these, the first (eating and drinking) is principally for Chrétien the occasion to deliberate the Augustinian contours of hunger and thirst, and thus most primarily of *desire*, as modalities by which we relate to speech; that we hunger and thirst for

469 Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 99.
470 Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 104.
471 Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 52.

speech, and for the nourishment of words in general and the Word in particular that is the 'bread of the angels,' is a constant theme for Augustine, because it is first a constant Pauline *topos*. Chrétien similarly reads Augustine's famous description of the Eucharist (in Christ's imagined words, "And you will not change me into yourself, as you do with the food of the flesh, but it is you who will be changed into me"[472]) as equally true of speech in its broadest definition: "we make [speech] enter into us in such a way that it becomes a part and a component of ourselves; inversely, we are assimilated to it as far as possible…".[473] Speech, especially when regarded with a view to the bodily dimensions thereof, is thus a matter both of growth and of unification: this is developed under the rubric of *ruminatio*, of the chewing of speech. In the final movement of this trilogy in miniature, that of the 'belching' of speech -- Chrétien does not apologize for the rudeness of this: it is as biblical as it is Augustinian, and he notes that the great majority of Augustinian evocations of *eructatio* refer to the prologue to John's Gospel, perhaps the loftiest and most philosophical passage of Scripture, which Augustine will frequently claim to be belched forth from the mouth of the disciple who, resting on Christ's bosom, drank there from the source --[474] the speech which has, in being assimilated to the body and the soul in the process of rumination actively becomes the preaching of that soul and that body. The main phenomenological point made here, which stands to be

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472 Augustine, *Conf.* VII.10.16.
473 Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 45.
474 Cf. Augustine, *Tractates on the Gospel of John* 36.1: "…what he has drunk in secret, he belched forth in broad daylight (*quod in secreto bibit, in manifesto erucativit*)."

missed either due to our discomfort with the impolite image or to its very obviousness, is one very familiar from *The Call and the Response*: just as one cannot drink a fizzy beverage without a constitutive esophagal response, one cannot hear or listen to speech without also speaking forth, and any body which is not speaking has not truly heard. This necessary progression from internal to external, from *in secreto* to *in manifesto*, is like the rumination of speech chiefly framed in terms of unification and sharing, but it crucially does not leave the realm of interiority behind: such is Chrétien's interpretation of the Augustinian heart, an important concept which as both corporeal and internal complicates any bifurcation between the exterior and bodily on the one hand and the interior and spiritual on the other.[475]

Such a communal being is at heart ecclesial and liturgical, for Chrétien as for Augustine

This complication is of a piece with the complicated relationship, often evoked by Chrétien as an *entrelacement*, between the immanent and the transcendent. While a fuller exposition of this central theme will be delayed for the moment, we can note on the related note of the fleshly heart that, although Augustine does often distinguish between the heart and the flesh (as for example in the distinction between the *petitiones carnis* and the *petitiones cordis*[476]), these are opposed not in any essential modality but only in the object of their request -- the requesting for gifts of God in the former case,

[475] Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 86. This is also why my body is able, even while I sleep, to bless: Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 174.
[476] Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 188ff.

and of God himself in the latter. And, as Chrétien will go on to argue, Augustine's development of the requesting of God, while this extends down to the deepest desire of the flesh (a thought he takes from Psalm 63), only takes its impulse and its fulfilment from an intra-Trinitarian request,[477] in which all of our requests -- for God or for God's gifts -- must participate even to exist. Perhaps the clearest examples of this logic emerge in liturgical formats: for example the resurrection of the body which occurs in the confession of sin as a participation in the incarnation of Christ,[478] or the amalgamation of the physical and the spiritual which emerges from Augustine's meditations on the participation in Christ which baptism forms. In this latter, Chrétien notes, Augustine will not permit a dualistic opposition between water and speech as respectively a material and a spiritual element, primarily because the water of baptism is also spiritual, and (most relevantly here) speech is also and equally bodily, and secondarily because both are temporal. Temporality is in the end the heart of this liturgical dimension of speech, just as it will surface as the heart of the phenomenological tradition. So it is that Chrétien returns, in the exposition of the songs of the church, to the Husserlian invocation of the song as the essential example of time.[479] In a passage regarding the song, as memorable as it is worthy of citing at length, he brings out the force and concentration of the Augustinian intermingling of the sensory and the spiritual in music:

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[477] Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 190.
[478] Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 215ff.
[479] Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 150ff.

> Singing is making what we most intimately are, and what we most secretly experience, rise from the chest and the throat and resonate in space and in the world. The joy or the sadness of a song is heard in the first instant, and is imposed with an obviousness which is music's own. The voice seems to be forgotten in its own song, and as to be lost, it which leaves no trace, in its own manifestation. This manifestation is at the same time intensely spiritual and intensely sensible. Spiritual, for, like dance, it does nothing but pass, it fades as it is manifest, and can only be manifest: it opens onto nothing, it has nothing to do with changing any aspect of the world when its resonances fades out. Sensible, even sensual, for what is more nude and more carnal than song?[480]

And it is also with regard to the musical, in particular with regard to the last passage of the *Enarrationes in psalmos* in which Augustine describes and exhorts the praise of the trumpet, the harp, the lyre and the rest of David's primitive symphony, that Chrétien closes *Actes de Parole* with a meditation on rejoicing. For Chrétien, the two Augustinian approaches to the symphony evoked in Psalm 150 easily shift from one into the other. On the one hand, Augustine sometimes reads the instruments as images of the individual body (for example, the cymbals are a presentation of the lips, because both species require a duality in order to make a sound). On the other, they are sometimes for him an image of the whole of humanity in the ecclesial body. In both interpretations, the central meaning of the image of a symphony is that of harmony and reciprocality, and the near perfect overlapping of these interpretations, shows the extent to which Chrétien appreciates the hardy literality with which Augustine takes the metaphor of the church as the body of Christ. This emerges in *Actes de Parole* with a degree of frequency far

[480] Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 151, citing Augustine, *Conf.* X.33.50.

outstripping the need to document it completely; we can note in passing its most striking examples -- that of Augustine's informing his congregation that, due to their participation in the universal ecclesial body, they each individually have a share in the perfectly polyglot nature of Pentecost,[481] and, in order to bring out the intensely corporeal nature of Augustine's thought of the body of Christ, even trans-historically speaking, the occasional reference to the reading of Scripture as the church's "respiration."[482]

Chrétien's ultimate account of the self is more closely tied to the Augustinian texts, and less determined by anti-metaphysical ideology, than that of Marion

In such instances, the reciprocal and mutually implicating relationship between materiality and spirituality in both the individual and the ecclesial body invite further reflection not only on Augustine's thinking of himself, but on his thought of selves in general. Much of the ground covered here is analogous with Marion's analysis, the influence of Chrétien on which is partially acknowledged.[483] Its prominent place in the opening chapter of *Actes de Parole*, that on "Questioning," is somewhat of a red herring; explicit recognition and reflection of the Augustinian thought of *le soi* is for the most part merely a background motivation for Chrétien's work, and it would be all to easy to overstate, in our comparison with Marion, the centrality of the following remarks to his overall project. In sum, the Augustinian self for

[481] Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 71, citing Augustine, *Tractates on the Gospel of John* 32.7.
[482] Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 85, citing Augustine, *De doctrina christiana* II.7.9ff.
[483] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 13, 302.

Chrétien is marked first by a thorough porosity, a constitutive openness to God, other people and objects throughout world around it. This emerges in several roughly synonymous formulations: -- the self is inherently translatable,[484] dialogical and textual.[485] Many of these formulations depend on the specific expression of points Augustine makes about universal human experience, and a defense of them as, in spite of their unanimous recognition, stretching outside the realm of the obvious. Such is the case with the observation that the human dependence on testimony, for example in order to believe in a foreign land which I have not seen firsthand, is rooted in a prior formal dependence on their testimony about those things which are most proper to me: I rely on the testimony of others in order to know my own birth and parentage, which is one of the founding aporias of the first book of the *Confessions*.[486] From this and similar observations, Chrétien generalizes that the self, when it questions itself,

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484 "To translate is always to be translated, to be oneself carried, in the same time as of the sense, and in order that the sense traverses and crosses from one language to the other. Whether one does it from one's own to another, or from another to one's own, whether one is exiled or one welcomes, it is always a matter of hospitality, whether given or received" (65).

485 "The psychology of reading thus passes near the essential. But to say that writing and reading are not less than dialogue, this is also to affirm that they have the same powers that dialogue has to awaken our attention and make us discover in ourselves buried, latent, unnoticed truths, which we thought we did not know. It is this that St Augustine calls *commemoratio*: that which has a place in dialogue, "this also is made by writings, where are found the deposits of things in which the reader, under the conduit of reason, discovers the truth: not a truth that he believes on the testimony of the writer, as he comes by it in a story, but a truth that he also discovers (*etiam ipse invenit*), whether in himself, or in this truth which is the light of the soul."# This is that in which the colloquium of the reader, far from leading to errancy or to dispersion, can bring us back to ourselves and in ourselves, can reveal in us what we did not know was there. The return to the self can pass by reading the books of others" (81).

486 Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 139.

> …calls for its own exceeding and its own overtaking … The brightness towards which it makes its way cannot only be that which it is given, that which it is susceptible of giving to itself. Left to itself, questioning discovers that it cannot, in principle, altogether discover me, that I am circumvented by my own obscurity.[487]

Along this particular register, that of questioning, an illumining example of Chrétien's willingness to engage Augustine as both a Greek and a biblical thinker arises. He notes that Augustine's thought of the questioning of the self takes as an example Christ, cross-examining those asking whether taxes ought to be paid to Caesar,[488] here construed as a particularly Socratic dialectician. In this episode we are taught

> …*that the truth of listening is questioning*. In what sense? If I cannot recognize the truth of anything at all except by consulting the light of the Word, every subject which has been held to me by others must be transformed by me in questioning in the face of this light. All must become question in the face of the Master, whence alone can come the possibility of a response. To listen in truth is to allow the other's affirmations become questions in me.[489]

This process of assimilating questions in the depth of the self is born, necessarily, out of encounters with other people as well as God -- in a passage which bears especial influence on Marion, Chrétien notes that the Augustinian nexus of confession *coram Deo* and *coram multis testibus* (which Marion reads explicitly as an early formulation of facticity[490]) is, against any introspection which takes itself as terminal, the precondition of any auto-manifestation, and the "nudity" which offers itself to the light of

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487 Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 17-8.
488 Matthew 22.15ff.
489 Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 20-1.
490 Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi* 213ff.

interpretation and reception.[491] He will make an analogous point about conversion as a "return" to the self, in his reflection on "Recalling:" taking as his starting point the paradoxical rendering of the Ascension in *Confessions* IV ("He has left, far from our eyes, so that we, we might return to our heart and find him there, *ut redeamus ad cor et invenimus eum*."),[492] he notes that any discussion of self-knowledge must parallel Christ's own absent presence -- as Christ, absent with regard to his body, can thus also (or only) be found in *our* body, so we, when we look to re-call our self, can also (or only) find Christ there. The *confessio*, then, is exemplary of the ontological recall, of which it is a particularly salient fragment. It is not a neutral report on the self, but a recollection of the self which at least alters, if it does not in fact constitute, the self. And this is as true (as Marion has seen) with the confession of praise or of faith as it is with the confession of sin, since to perceive oneself and (as Chrétien emphasizes beyond Marion) even more to articulate this perception is to be transformed by this very act, the recognition and self-presentation which is the first step towards progress, moral or otherwise. Inversely, to perceive oneself as a passive victim of circumstance is to constitute one's self as exactly this.[493] Chrétien finds an echo of this in the Augustinian elaboration of prayer: from its physical self-constitution (alike in either the lifting of hands or the pressing of the self to the floor) to its verbal self-articulation, Augustine's reading of the "scriptural invocation to

[491] Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 126ff.
[492] Augustine, *Confessions* IV.12.19.
[493] Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 228ff.

perpetual prayer"[494] is to take it not exactly as a moral exhortation, but as a phenomenological description of the self in which our requests disclose our selves, in their depths of the desire which constitute them, to ourselves, both elucidating us and inviting us to improve.[495] Again, if obliquely, the doctrine of the *imago dei* arises in this regard. The self, in its desire and in its desire to desire more completely, makes a sign or an image, such that for each person, "the highest possibility of his being and his speech is to show in himself his origin, not to obfuscate nor to veil in him the light which comes to him from it, in a word to become a living and active testifier" of his Trinitarian origin.[496]

In Chrétien's narration of the Augustinian progression, this relationship between the human and the divine, interchangeably that of 'sign' or of 'image,' arises first neither from biblical exegesis nor from philosophical consideration (although of course it is irrelevant to neither) -- time and again, the 'interlacing' of humanity and divinity comes from a specifically liturgically constituted speech.[497] The interlacing of the human and the divine, which ought irreversibly to complicate any account of human 'activity' or 'passivity' with respect to the divine, is colored first of all by its emergence in confession,[498] but just as strongly in the less obvious examples of forgiveness and baptism. In the former case, Chrétien says of forgiveness that it "sets in motion" the link between God and God's image in humanity, and that it

494 Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 171, alluding to 1 Thessalonions 5.17.
495 Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 186.
496 Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 139.
497 This term arises on 10, 38, 91, 122, 157, and 165.
498 Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 122.

does this by its verbal articulation in a "cruciform" structure which is supported both by a transcendent relationship between the human and the divine, and an intra-human relationship of speech directed from one finite image of God to another.[499] Due to the self's dependence with respect to God and to other historically situated selves, its condition is revealed to be that of an immediately self-negating poverty: "To request, to solicit, to beg, these reveal our destitution and our in some way beggarly condition, but to request *from God* is already resource and richness, for it is already to be held before him, to exist before him and in relation with him, which is the origin of every gift, every light and every good."[500] Such a dialectic is at root that of baptism, the speeches of which form the content of one of *Actes de Parole*'s longer chapters.[501] In baptism, we speak for others (or are spoken for by others) in at least two ways: the baptizer speaks for Christ, and (in the case, at least, of infant baptism, or baptism of those who for any reason cannot speak their own desire and commitment) the baptized is spoken for by those present who have command of speech. Here two of Chrétien's distinctive wordplays are apposite: the first and more directly Augustinian, that of the *infans* as one who cannot speak,[502] as a paradigm of all humanity, even if in diverse forms and to diverse extents, and the second, which resonates sharply with the meditations of Marion in the final essay of *Au Lieu De Soi*, that of our 'lieutenance' or literally 'place-holding' in speech. That in baptism we

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499 Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 229.
500 Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 183, citing Augustine, *Sermo* 61.7.
501 Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 233ff.
502 On this, cf. the brief and wise article of Janet Soskice: "Monica's Tears: Augustine on Words and Speech," New Blackfriars 83:980, 2007, 448-458.

speak both for Christ, who is speech, and the *infans*, who is speechless, and in fact identifies the latter with the former "in his entire temporal life," for Chrétien discloses "our facticity" in an "irreducible" manner.[503] The speeches of baptism, then, more than the other acts of speech described in *Actes de Parole*, "sets at stake the center of the Augustinian thought on identity and alterity":[504] the baptizand's historical placement, dependence on the traditions of the Church and on ancestral thought and practice, and finally her reception and inclusion in the body of Christ (with our without her understanding thereof) are not only a symbol or representation of the human stance before God. They all stand to disclose the human stance before speech, and thus are at least as phenomenologically revealing as they are theologically or ecclesially meaningful. Whatever its theological merits (and there are plenty), Chrétien's reflection here on the Augustinian thought of baptism incontestably lends an intriguing and suggestive interpretation, which is hard to imagine except from a sensitive phenomenologically trained mind, of the previously familiar (and thus all too easy to domesticate) anti-Donatist thought according to which "speech is stronger than the speaker."[505]

Chrétien does not bifurcate life from being, as Marion centrally does

This emphasis on and elaboration of *lieu*-tenance as a particularly disclosive metaphor for phenomenal reality ought not, nevertheless, to be

[503] Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 234.
[504] Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 245.
[505] Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 240, citing *Contra cresconium* II.21.26.

understood as a perfect anticipation, or even an *avant le lettre* authorization, of the whole of *Au Lieu De Soi.* One thinks for example of Marion's desire to separate Augustine from Descartes by sundering life and existence, and prioritize the former over the latter.[506] Directly contrary to this impulse, Chrétien's usage of the terms and concepts of life and existence can best be characterized as interchangeable, as the following discussion will make clear. I will still attempt to treat them disparately, beginning with the Marion-worrying existence and proceeding to the Marion-approved life, if only in order to show the precise degree of interchangeability.

When Chrétien cites favorably the thought of Rilke according to which '*Gesang ist Dasein*,' the song is existence,[507] it has the effect of rendering central the otherwise peripheral assertion, at the beginning of his chapter on the granting of requests, that each chapter is a meditation on *existence*, to the exact measure that it is also and more obviously a meditation on speech acts.[508] This rather offhand claim, which if we are to take it literally, revises an easy misunderstanding according to which the acts discussed in each chapter of *Actes de Parole* are discrete, disparate, and therefore separable from each other and from us. On the contrary, the degree to which Chrétien assumes a properly existential dimension to speech emerges at several points, and fuses each of these chapters together into a whole which is greater than the sum of their seemingly unrelated parts: much like careful attention, as Anne Davenport has argued, to the footnotes of Chrétien's earlier works

[506] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi,* 95.
[507] Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 153.
[508] Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 191.

allows an appreciation of a "choral" component of his philosophy,[509] the footnotes of *Actes de Parole*, and particularly the persistent intra-textual references from one chapter to another, point to a channel of unity under the shared ground of each chapter and each act of speech. This unity is, in brief, the theme of speech as transforming or "transfiguring" existence,[510] whether this transfiguration is indicated under the heading of "response," "praise" or "prayer" (the three acts of speech which Chrétien announces in his foreword would accurately capture the common spirit of all the acts he considers, and thus those which, although obviously central to Augustine's thought, do not have discrete chapters dedicated to them). It can arise in three basic gestures, figured throughout *Actes de Parole* in a predictable temporal tripartition. The transfiguration of our past existence occurs in a certain mode of *confession*, which is the "first possibility of speech and of existence";[511] that of our ever-passing present existence happens when this is "held under" the thought of *promise*, as another way (to be added to "sign" and "image," discussed above) of thinking our existentially constitutive distance and difference from our origin;[512] finally, Chrétien notes that *forgiveness*, in tying together confession and promise, is the central mode of "opening future possibilities of existence."[513] In all of these registers, Chrétien's regard on existence is of a piece with Marion's regard on the self, in that it is essentially referential, pointing at its center to that with which it is in relation. Its most rigorous

[509] Translator's preface to *The Call and the Response*, xxvii-xxix.
[510] Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 225.
[511] Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 122.
[512] Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 202.
[513] Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 223.

identity is alterity, and appears primarily as secondary: every existence is an existence "*secundum*" something,[514] which can as easily be translated by the conventional "according to" as the more rigorously etymological "following" of that which it desires, refers to, or belongs to. Indeed, this dimension of *belonging* is perhaps the most meticulous way of describing the intersection of speech and existence. What Chrétien says with respect to listening -- that it "forms a relationship of *belonging*, which sets our very being at stake. This is why only it can renew and nourish existence" -- is equally true of all forms of speech: "We have, for St Augustine, to become the residence of speech,"[515] the "plinth" of our existence which is at once its architectural base and its teleological goal.[516] This image, taken from the engineer's vocabulary, is for Chrétien that which sets aside the Augustinian reflection on the Johannine phrase regarding the bridegroom's friend who "stands and listens" from the ancient commonplace of human upright standing as a philosophically rich anthropological or biological truism. For Augustine, we indeed stand upright, but crucially not on our own two feet: "Of this upright standing, we are not the owners in such a way that it forms as a first condition, purely ours, so that we would be able to enter into relation with others and with the world. We are only standing because others, who speak to us, teach us and help us to do it. We have obeyed them."[517] Our standing, and our existing, as "walking exclamation points," are thus the heart of the bridegroom's

[514] Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 115.
[515] Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 29.
[516] Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 137.
[517] Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 25.

friend "rejoicing with joy"[518] in a never autonomous response to prior speeches and speech. This is mirrored in Chrétien's subtle gloss on the structure of the *Confessions* according to a schema of *exitus* and *reditus:*

"Listening as a new form of existence sets apart because it gathers together, and it gathers together because it sets apart: it is there where God tells me that I am the most alone, as one can only be in front of him, but it is this solitude which makes the chorus have need for me…"[519]

The emphasis on renewal and novelty transfers easily onto the register of life: in fact, in the most relevant passage of *Actes de Parole* to Marion's proposed subordination of the question of existence to that of life, Chrétien speaks of the speeches of baptism transforming, in the same breath, our life and our being.[520] For him, this is parallel to the Augustinian concern to include both body and soul in the action and the reception of baptism:[521] we can thus question whether Marion's vitalistic revisioning of Descartes does not in effect, when viewed from a sacramental perspective, cede too much to the Cartesian hierarchy he wishes to reverse, by missing the essential association between life and existence. Existence need not, as Chrétien has shown in the passages described above, be understood quite so minimalistically, as a static assumption or an eternally established stability. And Marion's laudable (and undoubtedly Augustinian) desire to do justice to creation, under the category of the gift, need not exclude a certain

[518] John 3.29.
[519] Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 35, citing Augustine, *Sermo* 161.7.
[520] Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 234.
[521] Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 237.

metaphysics, so long as existence is understood to be in some sense reciprocal, participatory, beyond any static and merely receptive relation to the gift.

This emerges quite clearly in Chrétien's overt discussions of life. For example, in his first mention of life in the opening chapter on "questioning," he refutes an "entirely psychological" inward questioning, relating it instead to the activity of the Holy Spirit in the self, as the love which precipitates any question : "It is a matter here of the properly crucial questioning, about our life and our death, for there is not other true sign of life than to let love be spread in the self, and no other true sign of death than to interrupt its circulation or make an obstacle to it."[522] Before any verbal interrogation, which is itself the beginning of speech, there is and must be a vital passage of love circulating in the self. This flow does not end with the onset of verbal speech, as the trilogy of chapters on speech as nourishment makes patent: "The importance of the notion of *life* is decisive here: to obey, this is to listen in such a way that one lives, or is revived, of the speech heard ... Speech is nourishing insofar as it maintains our life and our powers, gives us the capacity to act, restores us in every sense."[523] Chrétien notes that speech considered as life-giving and itself living, and thus as the original stimulation, the continuing sustenance, and the terminus of desire is one of the few thoughts common to Plato and Nietzsche.[524] The essential point is one dear to Marion, that speech considered in relation to desire reveals a degree of

[522] Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 16.
[523] Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 31.
[524] Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 38, citing Plato, *Phaedrus* 247d-248c.

dependence on something or somebody other than the self; to consider it as Chrétien does further, under the physical heading of hunger, brings out the implication that this desire is not a "distress" but a "blessing."[525] But it is a dependence which is not without its shadowy side, as our selves are characteristically, if not definitively, fooled into finding themselves as the authors and sources of the life by which they live. Such is the gloss Chrétien puts on Augustine's frequent quotation from the Psalms according to which *omnis homo mendax*, every person is a liar: he thus interprets life, as he has interpreted existence, following the Augustinian rubric of always being *secundum*. "To live 'according to the self' is to live a life where the self is erased and crumbled in being enshadowed, a life which forbids itself, for it has left the light in which and faced by which alone one can become oneself: that of the Other…".[526] Despite, or rather because, of this negative estimation of life according to the self, Augustine is able to think death, and particularly the speech of the dead, in a positive signification, as is most evident in the discussions of Scripture as a *sermo mortuorum*, a "discourse of the dead." For Chrétien , Augustine's willingness to acknowledge the words of Scripture as a dead "skin" stretched over the heavens is far removed from a "funereal or nostalgic" relation to the words and speeches of the prophets, evangelists or of Christ himself: "this definitive absentness of the authors … supports the growing life of the speech of which they are the instruments, of its progressive diffusion into all nations." In this regard Augustine's thought

[525] Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 38.
[526] Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 116.

represents a genuine departure from Plato's thought of written speech as the "orphaned" detritus of a "mourned" author -- the detachment of a written speech from its author does not kill or freeze it, but "is, on the contrary, the condition of its most proper future and its always more ample life" in the interpretation and assimilation of impending generations of readers.[527] This is true in parallel for the martyrs, whose most enduring speech is neither written nor spoken but lived: in addition to a consideration of speech as the source of life, and as itself living, Augustine describes life as speaking: "We can cry with our whole life, and Augustine says of the Christian: "Let his voice be in his works (*vox eius in factis sit*)."[528] The case of the martyrs escapes and thus complicates not only the duality of written and oral speech, but also that between words and deeds. Their lesson to posterity, taught by their testimony and by their death, is that speech is no more exclusive or hostile to works of charity than is death; so Chrétien interprets the Augustinian rhetoric according to which "they indeed affirm him [sc. Christ] even today, and it is today that they preach him; their tongue is silent but their acts resound (*tacet lingua, sonant facta*)."[529] That which binds together speech and deed, word and world, and even life and death is therefore, in humble deference to Paul, charity.[530] What Chrétien thus illuminates with regard to the speech of testifying is exactly congruent to the dimension of life as *praise*,

[527] Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 77-8.
[528] Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 169, citing Augustine, *Sermo* 88.12.
[529] Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 147, citing Augustine, *Sermo* 286.3.
[530] Cf. 1 Cor. 13.3.

as the psalms frequently say,[531] and Augustine no less frequently quotes, "Only the dead do not praise … and whoever does not praise is already dead."[532]

Finally, this dynamic portrait of all life, and all existence, as living and existing only as love and as praise finds its strongest and most metaphysical elucidation in a comment on the Pauline cosmological statement according to which "the whole creation [*ktisis*] groans".[533] As Chrétien notes, this verse posed an especial problem for Augustine, who battled his entire career against being perceived as beholden to Manichean ideologies, and in particular to a mythological cosmology in which each discrete physical body suffers to the extent that it is embodied. His explanation of how the *ktisis* groans if it does not suffer is for Chrétien a vital element of human life: "Every creature is reckoned in humanity, not because it englobes the totality of the angels and the transcendence of the Virtues and Powers, or the heaven and the earth and the sea with all that is in them, but in this sense, that every creature is either spiritual, or animal, or corporeal."[534] The groaning of the whole creation takes place only in human groaning, for only human groaning encapsulates body, soul and mind: in this sense, human speech is not only a speech which comes *from* a source which is other than it, but it is only truly human, and only lives, when it speaks *by* and *for* the rest of the world.

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[531] Psalm 115.17 and elsewhere.
[532] Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 123.
[533] Romans 8.22.
[534] Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 256, citing Augustine, *De div. quaest. 83* 67.

There is no artificial separation of phenomenology from ethics or politics in Chrétien's reading of the Augustinian *intentio*

One more difference from Marion's treatment of Augustine runs the risk of pushing Chrétien's analysis outside of the bounds of the phenomenological tradition altogether, to the extent that the tradition has always and definitively defended the extent to which it ignores politics and ethics, and denies that its analysis of phenomena depend on a prior or ongoing cultivation of any particular virtues.[535] Nevertheless, Chrétien's analysis of Augustine does not pretend (as does Marion's) that Augustine is so intentionally ignorant of or inattentive to the role which particular virtues and the practices by which we cultivate them play in speech. In this respect he is inarguably more faithful to Augustine than Marion (and considerably more than Heidegger). But it is also possible to suggest that, in Chrétien's development of an Augustinian ethics as prolegomenous to or concurrent with an Augustinian phenomenology, a critique of precisely this anti-ethical impulse emerges. To whatever extent I have been able to prove so far that the tradition and the practice of phenomenology is inescapably, and not just peripherally, bound to its interaction with Augustine, to that same extent it must be recognized that Augustine's own thought of the relationship of phenomenology (or for that matter ontology) with ethics can revise, re-

[535] This account, necessarily painting with too broad a brush, leaves out certain figures -- most notably Levinas -- as being at the least problematic from the strictest of phenomenological perspectives, and more importantly as not interacting with Augustine in any meaningful way. So I mean this contextualizing preface to Chrétien's brief and occasional analysis of Augustinian ethics to be read in a suggestive, rather than a definitive, polemical or dogmatic, tone.

determine and re-institute an ethical agenda for phenomenology. For this project, Chrétien's analysis, in its less polemical and more meditative and hermeneutical tone, is a good starting point: for him, Augustine's thought of the appearance, reception and production of phenomena, and particularly that of speech, exists in a circular or reciprocal relationship with the virtues of the person who receives, produces and exists in speech. It is another instance, and perhaps the paradigm, of the *vox in actis* alluded to above: a voice can emerge in virtuous and charitable acts, which further clarify the voice understood more strictly as vocal.[536] This reciprocal logic is, not insignificantly, precisely parallel to the reciprocality of the giving and receiving of speech, existence and life which we have seen above. The primarily relevant virtue, as Chrétien rightly notes several times, is that of humility, which appears in many guises : whether this is the humility which is requisite for any act of listening,[537] the humility which emerges in our desire,[538] humility as the "cure" for Babel's pride,[539] the humility of submitting one's interpretation of Scripture to the ecclesial community,[540] the humility of recognizing the insufficiency of theological images or language,[541] the humility of Job seeking to renounce all the gifts of God in order to receive God,[542] and most insistently, the humility Christ, the "doctor" and "master" of humility, exemplifies in the incarnation, namely the humility of

536 Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 171ff.
537 Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 34.
538 Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 40.
539 Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 69.
540 Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 84.
541 Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 96.
542 Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 175.

being or becoming human.[543] The heart of all these humilities is for Chrétien the recognition that the self is not its own source. He reads this recognition -- and not principally the Incarnation -- as what is absent in the *libri platonicorum* of *Confessions* VII.9.13,[544] and although finding this virtue to be so explicitly linked with the "monstrous pride" of the man who introduced them to Augustine represents a slight eisegesis, the implicit inverse connection between that man's pride and the earthy humility of the incarnation (which is what Augustine expressly describes as missing from the Platonist's books) bears some of the weight of the eisegesis. Here above all other places, Chrétien's treatment of Augustine on the virtues appears in its enormous difference with that of Marion's: for Marion, who pays humility the service of his only extended commentary on any virtue, it emerges first and decisively in a negative register, as merely the privative shadow of the *ambitio saeculi* in *Conf.* X.37.61. It is part of a bad and inescapable dialectic, wherein the self's humility becomes a source of pride, such that the more deeply humble the self becomes, the more open it is to a pride which parasitically undermines it.[545] There is no question that Augustine toys with such an aporia, but Marion's refusal to place it in humility's broader incarnational context within Augustine's thought, as the most fundamentally Christian virtue, and that which renders any other possible, pushes Augustine farther in a quasi-Lutheran direction than the impulse of the rest of the Augustinian corpus will sustain. Chrétien does not so easily succumb to this

[543] Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 46, 101, 105ff, 175-6.
[544] Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 141.
[545] Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi,* 221.

lure. His treatment of humility, by keeping a Christological centre, allows that paradoxical phrase "master of humility" (as Chrétien notes this is a "constant theme of the Augustinian meditation") to shine forth in all its precision. Against or beyond Marion, the circularity or reciprocity presented by humility does not stop with the temptation towards pride in our humility (which for all time retains its status exactly as *temptation*); this temptation leads the already partially humble self, in recognizing the temptation, to become more humble. Reason to believe that, for Augustine, this humility bears a dimension of the incarnation of God into each self materializes especially in Chrétien's discussion of the confession of sin, characterized as the process by which we "permit God to inhabit us."[546] The humility of repentance, which anchors and confers reality upon any confession of praise,[547] has a strictly *poetic* character. Not only does it create the self, as Marion has well shown;[548] it is the primary meaning of the Johannine phrase, dear to Augustine, according to which we are able to *veritatem facere*, to do or to make the truth. Confession of sin, and of the distance between the created self and its creator, is "the most precise definition" of this phrase.[549] And, noting that *veritas* is one of Augustine's most familiar and rich names for Christ, the humble confession of sin has the effect of deification:[550] "To do the truth, to confess one's injustice, this is the incessant work by which we let it be done

546 Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 127.
547 Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 134.
548 Marion, *Au Lieu De Soi* 56 and *passim* in the first chapter.
549 Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 128.
550 Although neither Augustine nor Chrétien uses this language in this respect, it is difficult to deny that this is the end of the logic here.

in us, penetrate into us in such a way that it transforms us. 'To do' it is to be offered to it in the way that it opens in us."[551] Continuing on this creative way of humility which confession opens in the self leads to a deeper and more lush humility: it is an *ascesis* which enriches, and, similar to the dynamic according to which prayer is always at its root a prayer for the ability to pray, so too is humility a "perpetually necessary apprenticeship."[552] Necessary for two reasons: in itself, because this logic of a radical confession wherein the self confesses its inability to confess is extended through all time, and externally, because of Augustine's commitment to the language of both illumination and purification as modes of learning.[553] Physical, metaphysical and ethical learning all occur for Augustine in a proto-phenomenological (and yet also ethical and ontological) key, "by purifying and orienting our attention."[554] This is the circularity of the virtues in Augustine's conception of and practice of philosophy: to purify our attention to the Truth, it is sufficient to direct it to the Truth, and so to direct it is so to purify it. Or as Chrétien more lyrically puts it:

> It is not enough that it is day, it is still necessary that we open our eyes and keep them open. And it is not enough to no longer see the day, it is still necessary to be seen oneself in the clarity of the day, to put forward the offering of one's own visibility to the light, to go there in person, body and soul.[555]

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[551] Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 129.
[552] Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 185.
[553] Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 80-2. Cf. Augustine, *De doctrina christiana* Preface 4-5.
[554] Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 112.
[555] Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 129.

The light of the Truth, both as divine and as human, is strong enough to strengthen our ability to see it.[556] Chrétien is on his guard against this notion seeming too "illuministic," or making of the human self and its speech only a receptive passivity: confession is impossible without a prior forgiveness, but this forgiveness is also not unidirectional, but "circular," coming from the transcendent to the immanent and then, crucially, circulating within the immanent, coming not only *to* me but extended *from* me to others.[557] For if confession, forgiveness, and the virtues which each of these presuppose and cultivate were exclusively the subject of human reception from a divine and therefore eternal source, and not also of human production, how would any temporal progression take place? That this is not the case for Augustine is confirmed, in Chrétien's eyes, not only by Augustine's innumerable ethical exhortations in his sermons and elsewhere, but in the strictly phenomenological description, thematically present throughout the Augustinian corpus, of life as a peregrination. The circulation of virtues between people, by which those virtues are multiplied and deepened, depends on a reciprocal relationship between faith and virtue within the self, which is "purified… to believe by travelling and to travel by believing."[558] In this respect, one of the most beautiful reflections of *Actes de Parole* entwines the question of speech and the self with a meditation on the mystical body of Christ as repeating its song with infinite variation: "It repeats -- this will be the theme, approached many times, of the *canticum novum*, the new song --

[556] Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 144ff.
[557] Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 230ff.
[558] Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 43, citing Augustine, *Sermo* 216.7.

because it lets, in the grace of God, identities to be interlaced and exchanged. I become myself in a song where others sing for me, just as I sing for others, and Christ in us all. The question '*who* sings, exactly?' is wounded, burnt by the lifting up and opening of the song itself."[559]

Chrétien's scattered remarks on temporality bind phenomenology to a metaphysics of creation

This thought of novelty emerging in repetition allows access, from these ethical concerns which might seem more at home in MacIntyre than in Marion, to a more familiar terrain for the phenomenological tradition -- namely that of temporality. Chrétien is habitually concerned with this theme, but in a fundamentally different manner than Heidegger or Marion is: rather than explicitly thematizing it in a lecture series (as does Heidegger) or in a separate chapter (as does Marion), Chrétien typically restricts the question of time and eternity to a sort of hiccup at the end of many of his chapters, considering to what extent, and in what ways, the act of speech at issue in that chapter is characteristic only of temporal life, and in what ways it might also enter eternity. Although this approach means that Chrétien at no point gives an extended exposition of *Confessions* XI, it does have the advantage of giving some textual breadth to his deliberation, recognizing that the interplay of time and eternity is not so concentrated in *Confessions* XI as to be missing from Augustine's thought throughout his career, in both pen and pulpit.

[559] Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 156.

Chrétien restricts his focus to the acts of speech which he has elaborated: careful attention to the question of the body in the resurrection, and thus of corporeal and imaginative perception, as well as intellection, will therefore rest silent for the moment.[560] For the most part, he is concerned to delineate and defend the role of speech in human eternity. Some of the *actes de parole* which fall away with temporality are fairly obvious: while the confession of praise will be eternal, the confession of sin evidently will not be, nor will the confession of faith.[561] Somewhat more surprisingly, he conceives reading as a properly temporal act, not because mediation will disappear when time disappears, but the particular form of mediation which we experience in books and in the Bible is a "viaticum, a provision along the way" to the place in which the world itself becomes our mediation: "The world was not made in order to end up with a book."[562] The speeches which persist in eternity are also more or less predictable: that we eat on and are nourished by speech,[563] that speech will belch forth in vocal praise,[564] that song, rather than mute contemplation, will be the mode of our praise,[565] and that this song is in continuity with the "song of the traveller," even if the traveller has reached home:[566] such are not only repeated Augustinian themes, but also biblical, and so Chrétien's frequent custom of reminding his readers at the end of his chapters that these forms of speech are eternal as well as temporal need not

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560 I will consider these questions in the final chapter of the present essay.
561 Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 134-5.
562 Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 88.
563 Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 49.
564 Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 61.
565 Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 100.
566 Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 153-4.

receive a full exposition here. What is more distinctive about his approach, and deserving of mention for what it discloses about the permeability of the physical and the metaphysical in his phenomenology, is the insistence that the presence of these acts of speech in eternity enact a "tension" on their presence and production in time. Such is the case, of course, with the acts of speech which are by definition rooted in the future, such as the promise.[567] Likewise with baptism, which more than the other acts of speech exists *per se* only in one instant of my life, nevertheless "produces a belonging to Christ which will have no cease in time or eternity."[568] In both cases, and indeed in the very logic of temporal and eternal praise, this tension is one of "the ardor and the grief of *hope,*" that which "forms the very movement of temporal existence."[569] The presence of both terms, the temporal and the eternal, in those acts of speech which most centrally define humanity as tensively drawn between them, is the *sine qua non* of the Augustinian thought of novelty. What is more, they characterize more than anything else the logic of love:

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567 "In fact, the promise does not only concern the future, nor one particular region of our existence: all of our selves are held under its light, and as we are never at the origin, there are always already promises held when we ourselves receive for the first time in our life the promise of God. 'Those to whom it has been promised are themselves also promised (*etiam ipsi promissi sunt*), so that it be the totality of the Body of Christ which says: 'It is by the grace of God that I am what I am.'" The promise does not only announce a future joy, it gives a present joy, which is that of hope: 'This voice which we have instead of the father and the mother (*quem habemus pro patre et matre*) whom we have left, this voice, listen to it! (…) It is the all-powerful who has promised, it is the sure who has promised, it is the true who has promised." (202, citing *enarrationes in psalmos* 118.XIII.1, 26.II.23, respectively).

568 Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 237.

569 Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 251-2.

"Charity alone is by essence new,"[570] only present as it is presented *now,* but this only because it has always and eternally been deployed.

We can now make explicit the already obvious fact that the *actes de parole* cannot be limited to what Anglophone philosophy has designated as "speech acts," although these are of course also included in them. A brief examination of the table of contents would make this clear: although certain chapters of *Actes de Parole* take their starting point with the performative aspect of the act of speech under consideration (baptizing, promising, blessing, requesting), the great majority are not so restricted. That this is so is most striking and most important in the final two chapters, on "groaning" and "rejoicing," as the wordless expression of the "unsayable."[571] The trajectory of Chrétien's argument, sometimes hard to discern due to his intentionally unargumentative tone, carries Augustine from questioning and listening (which are in fact one and the same) to groaning and rejoicing, and thus proceeds from the temporal and logical centre of speech and existence to the temporal and logical peripheries thereof, at the boundaries of the phenomenon under consideration. In the last two chapters, Chrétien argues that desire and joy blur even whatever provisional boundaries we could have drawn between words and wordlessness. The same pattern, he has not but could well have noted, is discernable in the *Confessions*, which bring us from Augustine's status as an *infans* through a period of rhetoric to a higher and inexpressible form of infancy (the *Confessions* leave us not with an Amen but

[570] Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 159.
[571] Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 249.

with an unopened door of speech).[572] Like the final "a" of the word Alleluia, which is "vocal but not verbal,"[573] speech and existence are bound together in their openness. And the final phrase of *Actes de Parole* -- "That which is higher than we can grasp, our throat and our breath must make it ring out, make it sound forth, in order to render testimony to the excess"[574] -- exposes excess as the Augustinian core traversing the whole of Chrétien's thought.[575] This excess, pushing our speech to the very boundaries of its potential, is nearly always expressed in language related not to words but to images, and not to sounds but to light.[576] For this reason, since light and images are frequently on Augustine's tongue, the next chapter will examine images and the imagination as a phenomenological register, parallel to speech, in which Augustine attempts to specify and refine his thought of the manifestation of excess.

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572 Augustine, *Conf*. XIII.38.53. On this see Charles Mathewes, "The Liberation of Questioning in Augustine's *Confessions*," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 70:3, 2002, 539-60.
573 Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 262.
574 Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 263.
575 Cf. Chrétien's own meditation on the excessive phenomenon as that which brings together all the various strands of thought in his career, in his "retrospection" in the English publication of *The Unforgettable and the Unhoped for*,.119-129.
576 Chrétien, *Actes de Parole*, 10, 14, 21, 26, 48, 76, 80, 86, 111, 116, 124, 128, 130, 138-144, 162, 170, 181, 202, 213, 223, 240, 248: this is not an exhaustive list.

V. On Genesis

Abstract

It is no accident that, among the phenomenologists who have read Augustine seriously, Chrétien is the most sensitive to the theme of excess, particularly with regard to the resurrected body and its sensation. One explanation for this may be found, I have argued, in his methodological willingness to consider the role of the Bible and of Greek philosophy in Augustine's thought. Besides this methodological point, however, there is a deeper continuity between theology and philosophy in Augustine's writings and his life, which can be seen most clearly in his critical exposition and defense of the role of material objects in the Christian life. Therefore, though the close attention paid by Marion and especially Chrétien to Augustine's doctrine of the self and its relation to the world has pointed us in the salutary direction of examining the centrality of creation, incarnation and the Eucharist in Augustine's thought, this examination remains to be more fully performed. It will be the work of this chapter to supplement the phenomenologists' readings of Augustine with an *ad hoc* ontology derived from Augustine's texts, primarily through an examination of the inventive and fertile biblical exegesis of *De genesi ad litteram*. However, since the phenomenological tradition at its best and most receptive to Augustine on his own terms has still depended on a simplistic reading of Augustine's relationship to the Platonic tradition, my argument will take a brief detour

into the dimension of late antique Platonism which would best supplement the most robustly anti-interiorist leanings of both Marion and Chrétien, namely that of theurgy, whose ritual and communal elements provided a framework for the metaphysics of matter and mediation onto which Augustine could easily (and at times polemically) hang his exegesis of Genesis and his proto-phenomenological account of the self and the world. In other words, I intend this to be a continuation of Chrétien's project, and thus a critique of the phenomenological antimetaphysical Augustine – or rather, the supposedly antimetaphysical Augustine, inasmuch as the Augustine presented by Heidegger and (especially) Marion actually represents not a lack of an ontology, nor a true fight against the ontological project, but only an impoverished ontology. I have suggested some ways in which this represents a failure to read Augustine seriously on his own terms; in this chapter I will suggest some ways in which it also represents a failure phenomenologically. Finally, I will offer some concluding evaluative reflections on the relationship between the phenomenological tradition and Augustine.

The Augustinian self is teleological, and so even when it attempts to account for the present moment, it always points back to an ontology of creation and forward to an ontology of resurrection

The ontological themes which Augustine delineates or seems to assume, particularly in his speculations about the resurrected fully human existence,

are the framework or even the horizon of the proto-phenomenological self as it arises from the Augustinian corpus. Heidegger and Marion are both far too willing to accept Augustine's famously *inquietum cor* as an easy resolution to the aporia of time; for Augustine, this aporia must be resolutely kept as the posing of a question which can only be resolved Christologically and in the teachings and rituals of the Church. Chrétien is more willing, alongside Augustine, to consider the eighth day not as an embarrassment to philosophy but as its culmination. To carry this prominent example further: it is easy enough to solve the question of time within time if one accepts, as the Heideggerean tradition does, an unmediated dualism between time and eternity (or more generally between finitude and infinity). But Augustine defers this answer; already in the first chapter of the *Confessions*, which gives the phenomenological tradition of reading Augustine its sloganistic *inquietum cor*, he places this *cor* in a crucial tension with the rest which it will one day enjoy (*donec requiescat in te*). Further still, in this paragraph, humanity is defined principally *not* as this restless heart, but as *aliqua portio creaturae tuae*, a participant (however limited) in the act of creation, which, in its desire to praise, has a mediatory role to play in the whole of being, rather than the rather mopey and narcissistic role which the *inquietum cor* taken out of context has suggested to the phenomenologists. Already in the first chapter of *Confessions*, in other words, is latent the last chapter of *De civitate dei*:[577] all of the overlapping trinities of participles (seeking, finding, praising; believing, invoking, seeking; exciting, delighting, praising) of this theological

[577] A chapter which is, tellingly, entirely absent from *Au Lieu De Soi*.

anthropology will eventually be tightened up teleologically: in the "end to which there is no end," Augustine posits (*pace* Marion) a place (*ibi*) which most centrally defines the essence of humanity: "*Ibi vacabimus et videbimus, videbimus et amabimus, amabimus et laudabimus.*"[578]

In the transition from "humanity desires to praise you"[579] to "there we shall rest and see, see and love, love and praise" as anthropological statements, there are two grammatical shifts worth noting: from the third person singular to the first person plural, on the one hand, and from the present to the future tense on the other. Within the context of the phenomenological tradition, it is also worthwhile to note a grammatical consistency: both passages remain, contrary to the phenomenological preference for the subjunctive mood, which indicates the possible, the potential, the hypothetical, firmly in the indicative mood. There is a place in Augustinian ontology, I will suggest, for the subjunctive – it exists most prominently in the repetitive *fiat*s of Genesis 1[580] – but by choosing these two texts as emblematic poles of Augustine's thought, I wish to emphasize that Augustine remains in the Aristotelian tradition of insisting that (indicative) actuality is prior to (subjunctive) potentiality. Husserl wavers, but finishes by accepting this Aristotelian tradition; Heidegger overthrows it; Marion has spent the better part of his career attempting to reconcile the two and to save

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[578] Augustine, *De civ. Dei* 22.30
[579] Augustine, *Conf.* I.1.1.
[580] Cf. Augustine, *Sermo* 117 and *De vera religione* 55.113, where Augustine explicitly suggests that the *verbum* which most closely approximates Christ is this jussive subjunctive *fiat*.

transcendence by preserving God "beyond being." All three of them miss the Augustinian genius of locating potentiality neither "below" nor "above" actuality, but of viewing potentiality as the temporally bound human side of actuality. There is again here a strong teleological current. As I will argue, the closer Augustine gets to imagining God by reflecting on the mediatory potential of creation, the more imaginative and the more speculative he becomes, and the more confidently he speaks in the future indicative. Such is the narrative of the entire *Confessions*. And viewed against this backdrop, the intentionally weak and restricted phenomenology of a Heidegger or a Marion, which may theoretically treat all things, but only to the extent that they rub up against the indicative mood, that is, the existence of the thing and the metaphysical conditions according to which it exists, is not wrong-headed as a prescription to the novice, the heretic, even the pagan; for the mature participant in the philosophical life of the Church, however, in trying to limit itself to mere propaedeutic to dogma, it falls short not only of its proper end, but also of even this more limited role. Even in referring to Christian teaching as *vera philosophia* Augustine has made it clear that the difference between (pagan or supposedly secular) philosophy and the Christian life is not one of type but of degree of intensity and veracity. If Chrétien has been, due to his relative lack of ideological pre-commitment to the Heideggerean Augustine, more methodologically able to see the extent to which Augustine is determinative for the rest of the Heideggerean tradition, perhaps his theme of excess may play out even on this ground. The history of phenomenological readings of Augustine tells us at least this much:

Augustine does not bear the bracketing of the speculative, of *teleiosis* and the resurrected body, of the dynamics of creation and of praise. His very words, even when taken out of their context, exceed such an *epoche*. If, then, one of Marion's more salient contributions to the study of Augustine has been providing a theoretical and epistemological grounding for viewing the words and works of Augustine as those of a living human, we may be permitted to, alongside Chrétien, extrapolate this approach further into its late antique context.

When he discusses Platonism with any detail, Augustine is most concerned with its communal and ethical aspect on the one hand, and its metaphysics of corporeality and temporality on the other

Outside the field of Augustinian philosophical scholarship, it has become commonplace to emphasize the practical and communal dimensions of ancient philosophical life. The methods and catchphrases of Foucault[581] and Hadot,[582] even of Wittgenstein,[583] ought to dovetail rather nicely with some of the directions towards which Marion gestures: we should regard

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581 See Foucault, Michel. *The Hermeneutics of the Subject: Lectures at the Collège de France 1981-1982*. London: Picador, 2005, and *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*. New York: Vintage Books, 1994**.**

582 See Hadot, Pierre. *Philosophy as a Way of Life,* trans. Michael Chase. Oxford: Blackwell, 1995, and *What is Ancient Philosophy?,* trans. Michael Chase. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002.

583 Wittgenstein, Ludwig. *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G.E.M. Anscombe. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1963.

ancient philosophy not as a series of dogmatic statements, but as the sometimes ascetic and sometimes celebratory practice of concrete communities. Augustine is, or should be, a prime test case for such an examination; one only needs to reflect on the absurdity of the biographies which perform a sharp delineation of "Augustine the philosopher" on the one hand from "Augustine the theologian" or "Augustine the bishop" on the other to realize the extent to which Augustine's roles intertwine. More than this: Augustine's episcopal duties simply *are* his exegetical and philosophical duties; his philosophical mind reaches its broadest challenges in his pastoral tasks (examples abound in the *Sermones*, but the opening paragraphs of *De trinitate* are more dramatic still). Christian teaching is not, in this regard, qualitatively different from pagan philosophy; the Platonic tradition in particular is by Augustine's time a living tradition of textually and ritually formed social communities, which form a horizon against which certain particularities of Augustine's own thought, teaching, and community organizing may emerge more clearly. This examination will be brief, and need not be excessively "object-historical" in the sense to which Heidegger objected – indeed, by necessity it will emphasize only those parts of the tradition with which Augustine himself directly engages in his most explicit discussions of the relationship between Christianity and the various pagan Platonisms. The reader will note that, though the phenomenological tradition's interpretations of Augustine are most sorely lacking in their accounts of Augustine's ontology, Augustine's own criticisms of pagan Platonism have little to do with those ontological doctrines with which

Anglo-American scholarship most commonly associates Augustine's alleged debts to Platonism (e.g. the doctrine of emanation), and much more to do with pagan ritual (including the social rituals of the formation of virtue). I will argue for an explicit link between Augustinian ontology and Augustinian ritual below; for now, I want only to note that his thought on both owes much to the Platonisms with which he interacted, even if this debt does not take the usual and usually maligned shape of a crude hierarchical emanation.

Why, in the above paragraph, the grating insistence on "Platonisms"? Within studies of late antique philosophy, in reaction to centuries of the hegemonic assumption that one can draw a simplistic line from Plato to Plotinus (and usually on to Descartes, with or without Augustine intervening), there has been in the last twenty years an equal insistence on the potential validity of differing disciples of Plato, and the multivocal chorus of their doctrines and practices. In particular, theurgy has increasingly come to be viewed as a potentially faithful development of Platonic doctrine (both textual and Academic), rather than a risible deviation from Plato.[584] There has arisen, concomitantly, a questioning of the assumption of Plotinian supremacy, for while Plotinus undeniably has some heavily qualified interest

[584] This view has been most prominently advocated by Gregory Shaw in his *Theurgy and the Soul: The Neoplatonism of Iamblichus* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995) but is also developed in Andrew Smith, "Iamblichus' Views on the Relationship of Philosophy to Religion in *De Mysteriis*" in H. J. Blumenthal and Gillian Clark, *The Divine Iamblichus: Philosopher and Man of Gods* (London: Bristol Classics Press, 1993) and Hans Levy, *Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy: Mysticism, Magic and Platonism in the Later Roman Empire* (Paris: Etudes augustiniennes, 1978). On all of these questions, Robert Crouse is an able and helpful guide. See his "*In aenigmate trinitas* (Conf. XIII 5,6): The Conversion of Philosophy in St Augustine's *Confessions*", *Dionysius* 11 (1987), pp. 53-62, and see further his "*Paucis Mutatis Verbis*: St Augustine's Platonism" in Robert Dodaro and George Lawless, *Augustine and his Critics: Essays in honour of Gerald Bonner* (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 37-50.

in ritual, this interest is far from central to his ontological or ethical systems.[585] Viewed from this perspective, the developments of Iamblichus and of Proclus towards a more centrally ritualist Platonism bear a striking affinity to Augustine's own criticism of the Platonism of his day. When it is remembered that Augustine's sometimes biting words about the *platonici* refer only to one culturally limited and highly selective development of Plato's thought, and that Augustine has very little criticism of Plato himself, a space for dialogue between Augustine and the so-called theurgical Platonists opens forth, in which Augustine appears not to reject, but to reform, the Platonic tradition. Therefore I wish to begin to develop the following argument regarding Augustine's relationship to Platonism: (1) that Augustine reforms, rather than rejects, the Plotinian Platonism that he inherits,[586] (2) that his reformation of Platonism is roughly parallel to the theurgical reforms of Iamblichus and Proclus, and so Augustine ought to be regarded as mediating between Plotinus and the theurgists in a way not yet recognized, at least in Anglophone scholarship,[587] (3) that Augustine's theurgical Platonism is radically Trinitarian, and (4) that this Trinitarian theurgy is at the heart of

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585 A good overview may be found in Lloyd, A.C. "The Later Neoplatonists." In *The Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy*, ed. A.H. Armstrong, 269-325. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967.

586 For much of this argument, I am indebted to the work of Jason Parnell. See **his** *The Theurgic Turn in Christian Thought: Iamblichus, Origen, Augustine, and the Eucharist*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2009.

587 Cf. Giovanni Reale, "La recezione del platonismo nel "de ordine" di Agostino" in Fabrizio Conca; Isabella Gualandri; Giuseppe *Lozza, Politica, cultura e religion nell'impero romano (c. IV-VI) tra oriente e occidente (*Naples: M. D'Auria*,* 1993*)*. See also Reale's *Aurelio Agostino: Natura del Bene* (Milan, Vita e pensiero, 1995), and Werner Beierwaltes, *Agostino e il neoplatonismo Cristiano* (Milan: Vita e pensiero, 1995), cited in Crouse, "*Paucis Mutatis Verbis*".

Augustinian ontology, primarily in the divine act (the-urgy) of creation, and derivatively in the divinizing act of cosmic and human liturgy. I will argue that Augustine's reformation of Platonism parallels Iamblichus' superficially, particularly in the former's few scattered remarks on sacraments, which, like the latter, emphasize the motif of sacrifice, angelic mediation, and the matter used in ritual. But the bulk of this essay is to show how Augustine radicalizes this theurgical tendency, in a Christological and Trinitarian direction (Christological, in that he brings together of finite and infinite being, not only in the Incarnation, but also in his doctrine of the *causales rationes* or 'rational causes' immanent in all things; Trinitarian in his revision of the Plotinian ontology of emanation and light). This will give rise to a discussion of Augustinian ontology, expressed as mediatory on two fronts: one, the properly theurgical, which mediates between transcendence and immanence on the plane of being, and two, the imaginatively realist, which mediates between faith and reason on the plane of sacramental existentialism. On both of these fronts (the ontological and the existential) Augustine is noticing and resolving certain tensions within the Platonic tradition.

Augustine views creation, incarnation and the Eucharist as the culmination of Platonic metaphysics

It is well known - indeed it is the classic starting point for any discussion of Augustine's Platonism - that the young Augustine is enamored with the books of Plotinus. Famously, the only difference he can perceive

between these texts and scriptural catholicism is the lack of incarnation - 'But that the word was made flesh and dwelt among us, I did not read there.'[588] This is often taken lazily as a lifelong critique of Platonism *tout court* - and not entirely without justification, as Augustine never discovers the radical claim of the Incarnation in any Platonist writing. However, Augustine explicitly says he intends to complete Platonism, and not to reject it,[589] and to at least some extent it is theurgical Platonism which gestures most clearly to Christian truth.

Seemingly the first and greatest obstacle to such a claim is presented by Augustine himself, in Book X of *De civitate dei*, where he denounces the Chaldean project as demonic; some of the harshest rhetoric (for example, calling the theurgists demons in human form) in the Augustinian corpus is directed toward the theurgists. But the Church has always been stricter with heretic than with heathen: indeed, the structure of *De civitate dei* I-X generally is a procession of polemics which begins with those polytheists least worthy of Augustine's attack, and progresses to the more noble adversaries: so when Augustine admiringly critiques Plato in Book VIII, he naturally progresses to Plotinus and Porphyry (of whom he implicitly says, when quoting the *Timaeus* to him, that his greatest failure is that he is not Platonist enough),[590] before culminating these books *contra paganos* with a critique precisely of theurgy.

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588 Augustine, *Conf.* VII.9.14.
589 Augustine, *De civ. Dei* 8.4-11.
590 Augustine speculates that if Plato, in his affirmation of embodied being, and Porphyry, in his insistence on the undesirability of re-incarnation, had been able to discuss these matters face to face, they would have converted each other to Christianity (*De civitate dei* 22.27).

The implication of this climactic critique is that theurgy, as a relatively true extension of Platonic thought and practice, is perhaps the closest the pagans ever got to Christian truth. The critique itself, interestingly enough, has two major foci: the first ontology, and the second social. In the first place, Augustine argues that pagan theurgy (unlike the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation) lacks a means of mediating between the temporal and the eternal; in this regard the link to *Conf.* 7.9.14 hardly needs to be belabored. In the second, Augustine's concern is more specifically pastoral; pagan theurgy intends to complete a lower form of purgation than that offered by pagan philosophy, and so is, on Augustine's reading, a way of separating between lower and higher parts of the soul, on the one hand, and lower and higher classes of society, on the other. The incarnation and the Eucharist, in contrast, purifies "the whole." It is holistic both individually and socially: "We need not seek one purification for the part which Porphyry calls intellectual, and another for the part he calls spiritual, and another for the body itself; for our most true and mighty Purifier and Saviour took upon Himself the whole of human nature."[591] It is crucial to note, in addition to this, that his critique is not against the theurgical *mode* of being-in-the-world, but only against its insufficient *end*: sacrifices, invoking the mediating angelic forces, and making use of the lowest forms of matter – this is precisely how Augustine describes the sacraments;[592] the only thing lacking in pagan theurgical practice is a sufficient mediator, i.e. a doctrine of the incarnation.

[591] Augustine, *De civ. dei* 10.42.
[592] Augustine, *De trinitate* 3.10.

Indeed the constructive context of Augustine's polemic in *De civitate dei* X is his treatment of the True Sacrifice, brought about by God Incarnate, through which 'the Church, being the body of which He is the Head, is taught to offer *herself* through him',[593] a fact which is only obscured when pious translators of Augustine render "*sacra*" as "mysteries" when Augustine is talking about pagan ritual worship, and "sacraments" when he is talking about the Eucharist or baptism. Pagan theurgy is simply insufficiently weird for Augustine (which itself takes a lot of imagination, as anybody who has waded through the fire and entrails of the Chaldean oracles knows); it cannot account for the self, for humanity which is 'a greater miracle than any miracle performed by man.'[594] Thus if theurgy is a radicalisation of certain elements of Platonism – the social, the textual, the ritual -- then Augustine conceives of his preaching and administration as a further radicalisation of these elements.[595]

The discussion of the Eucharist in *De trinitate* makes clear how the logic of the Christian sacrifice removes this false distance between offerer and offered, and Marion's and Chrétien's broad concerns about the self

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[593] Augustine, *De civ. dei* 10.20, my italics.
[594] Augustine, *De civ. dei* 10.12.
[595] Cf. Jason Parnell, *The Theurgic Turn in Christian Thought:* "In the end, when we scrutinize what is essentially theurgic in the thought of Origen and Augustine, we recognize that both thinkers, in surprisingly similar ways, construct provisional systems of Christian sacramental mediation, informed by a theology of the incarnate Logos, and conceptually parallel to the pagan and theurgic systems of mediation that their rhetorical approach rejects" (260).

makes relevant a full quotation of Augustine's development of this unified identity of these varying selves:

> What priest then could there be as just and holy as the only Son of God, who was not one who needed to purge his own sins by sacrifice, whether original sin or ones added in the course of human life? And what could be so suitably taken from men to be offered for them as human flesh? And what could be so apt for this immolation as mortal flesh? And what could be so pure for purging the faults of mortal men as flesh born in and from a virgin's womb without any infection of earthly lust? And what could be so acceptably offered and received as the body of our priest which has been made into the flesh of our sacrifice? Now there are four things to be considered in every sacrifice: whom it is offered to, whom it is offered by, what it is that is offered, and whom it is offered for. And this one true mediator, in reconciling us to God by his sacrifice of peace, would remain one with him to whom he offered it, and make one in himself those for whom he offered it, and be himself who offered it one and the same as what he offered.[596]

In this discussion, four dimensions of theurgical sacrifice ('whom it is offered to, whom it is offered by, what it is that is offered, and whom it is offered for') are all rigorously Christological, which lends an aesthetically fitting simplicity to this 'purifying' [*mundandis*][597] sacrifice beyond the complicated rites of the pagans. With Christ in the Eucharist as simultaneous offerer, offeree and offered, we have the culmination of the Christological radicalization of Platonist theurgical practice: God is in matter, and so accomplishes the assimilation of God, humanity, and cosmos.

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[596] Augustine*, De trinitate* 4.13.

[597] Note the odd (and perhaps neo-logistic – there is no attestation for this word pre-Augustine) use of *mundo* for 'purify,' instead of the much more common *purgo* or *emendo* - this is etymologically related to *mundus*, world. On the 'worlded heart,' the commensurability and co-porosity of the self and the world, cf. below.

These theological themes and practices show a continuity with Platonic doctrines to which the phenomenological tradition, and especially Marion, is willfully blind

This is also entirely assonant with the turn to the cosmos at the end of *Confessions* - the cosmic liturgy in Augustine is foreshadowed in Iamblichus.[598] Thus if, as Shaw has argued, the pithiest recapitulation of the difference between Iamblichus and Plotinus is the difference between *homoiosis kosmoi* [assimilation with the world] and *monos pros monon* [the flight of the 'alone to the alone'], Augustine is very clearly on Iamblichus' side (as is, I would argue, Plato), although the Incarnation and the Eucharist allow him to make this claim more strongly.

On this note there is a remarkable continuity found between the relatively late *De trinitate* and *De civitate dei* and the pre-episcopal "*si enim Plato ipse viveret*" passage of *De vera religione*. *De vera religione* in fact begins by defining "the true religion" not as Christian teaching, but as Christian worship. In this regard Augustine argues that the definitive break Christianity makes with pagan life lies in the unification of the private and the public, in other words the abolition of the esoteric. The structure of this argument makes possible Augustine's surprising apathy about the specific dimensions of the ancient schools; by taking it as given that the ancient philosophers "used to maintain rival schools but share common temples,"[599]

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[598] 'For Iamblichus, the cosmos itself was the paradigmatic theurgy: the act of the gods continually extending themselves into mortal expression' (Shaw, *Neoplatonism and the Soul*, 17).
[599] Augustine, *De vera religione* 1.1.

Augustine is able to disregard whatever differences in dogma separated them, due not just to their common pagan liturgies but to their equally common separation between dogma and worship in general. This is true with only one fairly predictable exception: locating the unique genius of Socrates in his inability to divorce his philosophy from his worship, Augustine points to the subversive Socratic habit of swearing oaths "by the dog" to illustrate and endorse the view that "any works of nature whatsoever, which are brought into being [the tellingly Hellenic word *gignerentur*] under the guiding hand of divine providence, are better, and therefore more worthy of divine honors, than the things that were worshipped in temples."[600] Socrates is, in this early work, already upheld, not for his superior metaphysical or ethical dogma, nor even for the virtue of his lived philosophy, but as a proto-theurgist in the very precise Augustinian sense. *De vera religione* still bears considerable Plotinian influence, for example in its relative denigration of images and the imagination,[601] which, as I argue below, dramatically disappears in Augustine's later commentaries on Genesis. But his peculiar presentation of that which in Christianity Augustine thinks would appeal to Plato demonstrates *in nuce* the sort of Platonism to which he aspires, and the most definitive foray of his entire philosophical career into intra-Platonist debates:

> If all this has happened; if it is being celebrated in *writings and monuments*; if from one small corner of the earth, in which the one God used to be worshiped and where it was fitting to be born... and if -- not to go on talking about past events which anyone may be free to disbelieve -- if *today* there is proclaimed throughout nations and peoples [several Scriptural quotations

[600] Augustine, *De vera religione* 2.2.
[601] Augustine, *De vera religione* 3.3.

> follow, centered on the fostering of virtues]... If these things are now *being read to ordinary people throughout the world* and are being listened to with reverence and the greatest pleasure ... if throughout cities and towns, camps, villages, hamlets and even private estates, the turning away from earthly affairs and conversion to the one true God is so openly advertised and sought after that every day, throughout the whole world, the human race *answers* with practically *a single voice* that "we have lifted up our hearts to the Lord," why do *we* still gape open-mouthed over the dregs of yesterday's drinking bout and scrutinize the entrails of dead beasts for divine oracles, while, if ever it comes to discussion, we are at greater pains to have Plato's name [*platonico nomine*, more accurately 'the platonic name'] rattling around in our mouths than our bosoms filled with truth?[602]

Hill remarks on this last turn of the argument: "This is a very curious finale to such a tremendous bout of rousing rhetoric." To this we may respond, "Only if one comes at it with Plotinian presuppositions!" Indeed, that this long encomium to the Christian faith will end with an internal critique ("why do *we*...?") of theurgical practices is practically telegraphed by the particular nature of the things Augustine praises about Christianity in the encomium itself: the "cleansing of the soul," the sacraments, ascetic practices, the "daily readings" in local church assemblies, and above all the universal celebration of these practices, all point toward a view of the Chaldean mysteries as neither silly superstition nor anti-Christian demonism, but only an obsolete and defunct (because too esoteric, too elitist, too restricted) practice of philosophy. And "defunct" is very nearly exactly Augustine's own comment

[602] Augustine, *De vera religione* 3.3-5.

on the practice of divinization via the reading of dregs a few paragraphs later: "*nimis puerile est.*"[603]

All of this bears re-integration into my foregoing arguments about the relative strengths and weaknesses of the phenomenological appropriation of Augustine. As I argued, two of the distinctive traits of Heidegger's existential reading of *Conf.* X are his apt estimation of how "Christianised" and "orientalised" the Platonism of Augustine's day was, and his subsequent wild underestimation of the extent to which this particular Platonism might inform our understanding of Augustine. This is the historical interpretation which will, several years later, lay the groundwork for his central distinction between phenomenology and metaphysics in *Being and Time*: by forgetting a truly Greek phenomenology, western thought had opened the door to metaphysical mythology, a door which Christianity had no troubles stepping through. His error here is perpendicular to the much more mainstream 20th century error (discussed in the introduction to this thesis), wherein the question of Augustine's Platonism is best answered by analogy to the question of Aquinas' Aristotelianism: in an attempt to save Augustine from the charge that his pagan environment has infected his Christian philosophy, one posits a faith which perfects reason. Whether, then, one suggests that the divide between Augustine and the Greeks lies between phenomenology and mythology, or between faith and reason, one keeps this divide on the order of knowledge, where a more truly Augustinian approach, as I have argued, would suggest the divide exists primarily on the order of worship and

[603] Augustine, *De vera religione* 4.7.

of love. Marion is, however, the more decisive figure for the current essay, and his attempt and ultimate inability to distinguish between Augustinian and Greek worships, and Augustinian and Greek loves, reveals the fault-line along which phenomenology either ruptures the Augustinian terrain, or gives into it and is itself ruptured.

Beyond metholodological concerns, Marion's aversion to Platonism causes him to misread Augustine's relationship to Scripture, and ultimately his situation of the self in a created world

On the order of love, then, Marion ably dismantles the once-influential hyper-Protestantism of Anders Nygren,[604] but his anti-Hellenic temperament betrays his more fundamental inability to leave the early 20th century. On the surface at least, Marion's new book appears to be his attempt to translate his project into Augustinian Latin (so *la reduction* becomes *confessio*, *l'adonne* becomes *ego*, the saturated phenomenon becomes *pulchritudo*, etc.) Three possibilities emerge: is Marion trying, in this translation, to bring his own ideas into conformity with Augustine, or is he trying to bring Augustine's ideas into conformity with his own, or, beyond these two, is he trying to show that no special effort is required for either project, since their ideas are already more or less identical? If it's the first (conforming his ideas to Augustine's), the book is objectionable from a phenomenological standpoint; if the second (conforming Augustine's ideas to his own), it is

[604] Jean-Luc Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi,* 222ff.

objectionable from both an historical and a theological standpoint; only the third is acceptable. But as I will argue, this third claim (that Augustine's and Marion's projects are virtually indistinguishable) can only make sense if Marion is willing to drop his cherished, and altogether self-imposed, distinction between phenomenology and metaphysics. The answer to this question rests in no small part on what it is he means by his opening claim: "St Augustine does not speak the Greek language."

If we can assume that this claim is not banal, we must, in revisiting it in a more evaluative key, read it as enigmatic: what does it mean to claim that "St Augustine does not speak the Greek language?" Perhaps the best way to explicate Marion's project and its relation to Augustine is to approach it indirectly, by outlining the misreading which, to my mind, Marion invites. Let me be clear: I think the following explication *is* a misreading of Marion, which I will correct, in fairness to Marion; however, it is a misreading for which it is hard to blame those who hold it; I think Marion is ultimately to blame for this misreading, particularly due to his allergy to the word metaphysics.

On this misreading, Marion's 'approach to Augustine' thus attempts to treat his relationship to the Greek tradition, his metaphysics or lack thereof, and his treatment of the Bible. In all of these cases, Marion's phenomenological leanings are clear: in the case of the Greeks, Marion's preference is for describing Augustine's similarities with Aristotle, rather than

the Platonists;[605] in the case of metaphysics, Marion asserts resolutely that Augustine is 'non-metaphysical';[606] in the case of the Bible, Marion argues for the philosophical centrality of Augustine's commentaries on the psalms,[607] since the psalms (much like the confessions) refuse the hubristic tendency to speak of God in the third person, and thus the allegedly idolatrous reduction of God to phenomenon; additionally, the formal logic of both the psalms and the *Confessions* seem to displace or decenter the human subject: thus Marion's frequent citation of Augustine's famous 'I have become a great question to myself'. Thus, according to this misreading, Marion's opening claim can be supplemented: 'Augustine doesn't speak the Greek language, [sc. 'but he does speak Hebrew']." We can note in passing how strangely collusive Marion's project is with classical liberal Protestantism in this regard!

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605 'In the same sense, the very long and rich debate on the supposed neo-Platonism of St Augustine …no longer seems today to be as determinant as when it began; not that the question is without its interest, but it seems less central, if not marginal: first, because St Augustine does not use the fundamental concepts of NeoPlatonism, or rather, Neo-Platonism (if only because God does not identify with the One, nor the Principle, nor even with the Good), second, because an author can influence another without explicitly reading him, and finally because it is advisable to take seriously his judgment, negative without any ambiguity, on these doctrines" (18-9).

606 Marion's project is 'to test how far the non-metaphysical character of [the phenomenology of donation] goes … One should, then, read from a point of view identifiable at least negatively: from a non-metaphysical point of view. And thus as our contemporary utopia, to us who try to think a post-metaphysical point a view. He can guide us in advance and without preconceived intention … Thus we may hope for a reciprocal proof: to test the non-metaphysical status of St Augustine by its more intelligible terms of a phenomenology of donation, but also to test how far the non-metaphysical character of this phenomenology goes. To this end, our attempt at reading imposes on itself that which St Augustine imposed on himself, or performs spontaneously: not to employ the lexicon of the categories of *l'etant*, not to impose *a fortiori* the concepts of modern metaphysics on him, in one or the other of its statements: in short, not to speak the language of metaphysics." (28)

607 Cf. *Au Lieu De Soi* 181.

To this, those critics of Marion who subscribe to this misreading are likely to object: to claim that Augustine does not simply repeat Plotinian doctrines does not imply that Augustine does not interact with the Platonic tradition, and to claim that Augustine does not make a rigid distinction, in a linear and systematic presentation, between ens and esse, does not imply that Augustine does not treat metaphysical questions. One needn't be Plotinus to be a Platonist, nor Thomas to be a metaphysician. The misreader would then likely point out the problem with this individualist portrait of Augustine: for Augustine, the self is not only displaced with respect to itself, nor is it only displaced with respect to God -- as early as the *Confessions*, and for the remainder of his career, Augustine describes the self as displaced with respect to all of the created order, because this created order is itself always displaced, de-centered, by the same structures of time which have displaced the self. So, this misreading would conclude, Marion is reading Augustine as a theorist of existentialist praise, a thinker of the transcendental subject; this is borne through much of Marion's exegesis of Augustine, and particularly evident in his prioritization of the Psalms (with their refusal to speak of God in the third person) as the biblical text which best encapsulates Augustine's philosophy: much like Buber and Levinas, Augustine would appear to be an anti-metaphysical phenomenologist, an anti-platonist, even an anti-rationalist. Now, I will defend Marion against this misreading, before I conclude this section by arguing that, by downplaying the very real "Greek" nature of Augustine's thought, he brings it on himself.

Marion extends his analysis of the self towards the entire created order, but does not appreciate how this subverts his aversion to a metaphysics of participation

Marion makes it very clear that it is not the case that *ego* is the same as *le soi* (as the central essay of *Au Lieu De Soi* argues). *Le soi,* the self, is always called from elsewhere (*d'ailleurs*), and thus it is perpetually destabilized, or if one likes, de-centered, by the response of praise that it offers to the initial call of creation. So far, so good: but Marion here, as far as I know for the first time, acknowledges that it is not only the human self that fits this formal structure: through his reading of Augustine on Genesis, Marion extends this de-centered account to all of creation. It is worth quoting at length.

> In fact, creation and praise reciprocate each other, and render each other mutually possible: "*Te laudant haec omnia creatorem omnium* ." In other words, the formula "*Laudant te opera tua* " must be heard as a pleonasm, or rather as an equivalence.[608]

We must ask: is this not closely parallel to theurgy, in its double motion? Even linguistically, *opera tua* would best be rendered in Greek as *the-urgia*, and so the understanding of God's working as equivalent with the ritual divine works closely resembles the Iamblichean understanding of the appearance of phenomena as simultaneously creation and praise. In this respect, we should note, Marion stops just short of agreeing with my assessment of Augustine as a theurgic reformer of the platonic tradition, in parallel with Iamblichus and

[608] Jean-Luc Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 324, citing Augustine, *Conf.* XI.5.7 and XIII.33.48.

Proclus. But directly after Marion claims this theurgical cosmology, he quickly asserts that it has nothing to do with ontology: he says, '[The word] "Creation" does not belong to the lexicon of being, nor of Being, but to a liturgical vocabulary, as *confessio* and as praise, which alone recognize and establish it.'[609] Marion makes, at the very centre of his essay, a persuasive case for a decentered or ecstatic self, which no longer has its place – and he even, in being willing to read Augustine seriously on Genesis as the *creation of heaven and earth*, extends this to the world, qua created. But he argues too hard, against Augustine himself, that Augustine divorces liturgy from metaphysics, in other words that Augustine doesn't then *save* the "natural attitude," or posit *creation* as a specifically ontological category. Marion here had the chance to perceive that when Augustine reads Genesis (as I will argue below) as a text of becoming, he attempts a definition of becoming as metaphysical without being onto-theological – that is, he tries to think time and being in such a way that creation, and the self, are real, and yet in time. To the extent that Marion wants to overcome the Heideggerean idolatry of silence, it would seem that an explicit reading of Augustine as *both* the founder of phenomenology *and* a strictly metaphysical realist would be a powerful opportunity. This question of Augustine's theurgical Platonism, then, far from being a matter of mere 'object-historical' interest, ought to challenge the very foundations of Heideggerean phenomenology, and have a rippling effect on all of his heirs, insofar as they have uncritically accepted the hypothesis that all metaphysics is ontotheology. But in his fear of the

[609] Jean-Luc Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 324.

Greek language, and in spite of his beneficial (albeit too limited) attention to the biblical commentaries, Marion misses this opportunity.[610] And this is where it is finally objectionable for Marion to claim Augustine as an ally on his anti-metaphysical team: Augustine is very clear that Genesis is a metaphysical, as well as a cosmological, text. It is well known that Augustine finds the Trinity in the first two verses of Genesis; what's perhaps more interpretively bold is that in Genesis 1.1 alone, Augustine finds the ground of being and becoming.[611] Every point that the phenomenological tradition may make about the self, then, ought to be transferred onto the realm of becoming as such. So, for example, when Marion reads Augustine's description of God as *interior intimo meo* (closer to me than my centre) as an anticipation and critique of the *cogito*,[612] he misses the corollary doctrine of the seminal reasons, discussed below, by which Augustine argues that Christ is the 'reason' of any thing, the *ratio* in the center of any entity, so God is also *interior intimo mundo*. The resultant ontology, in which nothing is simply

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610 In the wake of his phenomenological critics, it is understandable that Marion wants to abstain from making judgments about the *real existence* of phenomena-as-given, or phenomena-as-revealed; this would violate his self-imposed self-definition as a phenomenologist-to-the-exclusion-of-theology. The objectionable point is trying to enlist Augustine as performing this same task.

611 Augustine interprets heaven as 'a spiritual created work *already formed and perfected*' (1. 9.15) and earth as 'the imperfect material substance from which temporal things would be made [or become, *fierent*]' (1.9.15). That is to say, heaven as the eternal realm of being, and earth as the temporal realm of becoming. So 1.4. 9: 'In Him who is the Beginning, Holy Scripture places the origin of created being [*creaturae existentis*], which exists through Him but still in an imperfect state. But it shows that to Him as the Word belongs the perfecting of created being, which is called back to him to be formed [*formaretur*] by a union with its Creator and by an imitation, in its own way, of the Divine Exemplar, who, eternally and unchangeably untied with the Father, is of necessity identical in nature with Him.' This is also more or less the logic behind reading *principium* as Christ.

612 Jean-Luc Marion, *Au Lieu de Soi*, 285.

tautologous to itself, and nothing is its own centre, but God is the center of all, is a circular ontology[613] - the Augustinian *ordo* is not so much hierarchical in a Plotinian sense, but more in Denys' sense, where Love (viz., God) is both at the centre and the circumference of the order of being. This may be why the Augustine's most commonly used ontological terms are not "higher and lower" but "inner and outer." He argues: **'**Without any distance or measure of space, by His immutable and transcendent power he is *interior to things* because they are all in Him, and *exterior to all things* because He is above them all.'[614] Of course this theurgical ontology is exactly parallel to, or even congruent with, his account of temporality: "Moreover, without any distance or unit of time, by His immeasurable eternity He is more ancient than all things because he is before them all, and newer than all things because He is also after them all."[615] The implication of this theurgical ontology, where interior and exterior and tradition and novelty are all convertible and porous, for the human self is, however implicitly, the doctrine of deification: or, the entirely teleological doctrine of being made *ad imaginem dei*.

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613 This runs parallel to Augustine's theological method, according to Gilson: Following Pascal, Gilson tries to excuse Augustine's unsystematic, non-linear approach to philosophy as following not the 'process of the intellect,' as does Thomas, but 'a doctrine whose center is grace and charity.' While Gilson has to overcome his natural distaste for the non-linear exposition, in doing so he makes a very important point: 'The natural order of an Augustinian doctrine is to branch out around one center, and this is precisely the order of charity.' (237).

614 Augustine, *De genesi ad litteram* 8.26.

615 Ibid.

Scripture is, for Augustine, a metaphysical text

Although I am here arguing that the groundwork for this ontology is laid in Platonic texts, it is worth noting that its more direct source is scriptural. For Augustine, of course, there need be no strict line drawn between philosophy and scripture; the *Confessions* are in large part the claim, put in narration, that the Bible is the philosophical text *par excellence*. For this reason, I here take an exceptionally brief detour into Augustine's general practice of reading Scripture; without an understanding of how Augustine regards the Bible, only a severely deficient account of how Augustine reads being itself can be offered. Augustine wrote major commentaries on three books of the Bible, and one's choice of which will be their primary scriptural interlocutor tells us much about one's reading of Augustine more generally. Gilson, for example, focuses on the *Tractates* on John's Gospel, since his treatment of the Incarnate Word, considered in isolation from this Word's creative capacity, suggests a proto-Thomist divide between faith and reason. Heidegger, in his rare references to Scripture in Augustine, confines his gaze to Paul; the very Lutheran Augustine which emerges ought not to surprise, though the lack of systematic philosophical exposition of Paul in Augustine ought to have slowed Heidegger down on this trajectory. And as noted above, Marion finds the lens of the Psalms most amenable to his fairly localized project of defining the self as displaced, particularly with regard to language and praise. In this essay, and as a corrective to these subtle but

determinative decisions, I will confine my attention primarily to the book Augustine found most fascinating, perplexing, and revelatory.

Notwithstanding Augustine's comments in *Retractiones* about, e.g., his *imperfectus liber*, there is a good reason, internal to Augustine's own logic, that he returns so frequently in his career to considering Genesis: all of Scripture for Augustine is multivocal, as we well know in the wake of de Lubac's *Medieval Exegesis*, but more than this, the Genesis account of creation itself provides justification for this doctrine. He interprets 'be fruitful and multiply':

> In all these things [all created matter] we find multitudes and abundances and increases. But only in signs given corporeal expression and in intellectual concepts [*in signis corporaliter editis et rebus intellegibiliter excogitates*] do we find an increasing and a multiplying which illustrate how one thing can be expressed in several ways and how one formulation can bear many meanings.[616]

There is a widening hermeneutic circle at play here that runs beyond the simple multitude of correct interpretations which de Lubac enumerates (literal, allegorical, moral, anagogical) - Augustine finds in the command to be fruitful the grounds for his multiple readings of Genesis. Just as both 'corporeal signs' (paradigmatically, one assumes, the sacraments, but by extension all created things) and intellectual concepts, Genesis presents a unity which necessarily gives rise to multiple interpretations – the forms and the sacraments, much like scripture, are mediated to all hierarchical levels of charitable interpreters in many different ways. This is the precise ecclesial

[616] Augustine, *Conf.* XIII.24.37.

sense in which Augustine 'finds himself' on the pages of Genesis, and the reason that he comes back at various stages of his life to interpret the self that he finds there.

Time here is central to the ecclesial multiplication of meanings: as time progresses, there are more and more saints of whom any given text is true, and (infinitely?) more ways in which that text can be truly understood. Time is thus neither a crude Nietzschean recurrence (a paganism which Augustine vigorously denies in *De civitate dei* 12) nor a more refined Hegelian dialectical progress, but a widening circularity, in which true interpretations of Genesis, as of all revelation, are infinitely multiplied even as they retain their unity in the text. The biblical source, in other words, is pregnant with these meanings (to the point that Augustine speculates that Moses may have been aware of all of these possible meanings). This bears, as we shall see, a deep affinity with Augustine's sacramental ontology, such that we would not be far amiss to characterize the reading of Scripture as a communal, sacramental and creative activity: he says as much in his commentary on "and so it was done", claiming that each human understanding of revelation is a participation in this divine creative accomplishment.[617] For this reason, Genesis is dangerous to the project of the anti-metaphysician;[618] something

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[617] Augustine, *De genesi ad litteram* 3.23.35.

[618] Heidegger himself seems to have realized this; the only scriptural citation in *Being and Time* is a critique of the anthropology of the *imago dei*, Gen. 1:26. and that it is in the same context as '*zoon echon logon'* - - and of course, this is Heidegger's objection, that 'having reason' and the 'image of God' construed as transcendence of the self is precisely what hides our mode of being (namely, ontological, asking the question of being) from us (48). As I will argue below, this shows a deep misunderstanding of the Augustinian doctrines of *imago* and of *ratio*.

like this claim underlies much of the industry of post-modern hermeneutical studies of Augustine, whose ties to the phenomenological tradition are many, though largely under-conceptualized.[619]

But again Augustine is making a bolder claim on behalf of the words of Genesis: it is not only that these words mean something for all, but that they actually contain within themselves all things. Scripture is thus ontologically pregnant, the 'skin stretched over the heavens,'[620] growing teleologically forth beyond itself in the Church's practice and understanding:

> There are things of which the knowledge is fixed and determined with the generations, such as the lights of wisdom and knowledge. But while the truths of these things remain the same, their embodiments in the physical realm are both many and varied. One thing grows out of another [*aliud ex alio crescendo*], and so, by your blessing [*in benedictione tua*], God, things are multiplied.[621]

There is an ambiguity in this phrase *aliud ex alio* - this crescendo of 'one thing out of another' (as we are forced to translate the phrase) is more literally of 'one (other) out of (one) other.' For Augustine, the book of Genesis, when read as a philosophical treatment of becoming, is an text of ontology (in something very like Heidegger's meaning of ontological), a text of the phenomenology of gift (in something very like Marion's sense), and a text of theurgy, in a meaning of that word that is more or less peculiar to Augustine himself: and it is in this sense that Augustine contributed to the Platonic tradition. I now turn to two of the most prominent ontological doctrines to

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[619] A full biography of this issue (centering on Ricoeur and to a lesser extent) would push the present study well beyond its bounds; Brian Stock's *Augustine the Reader* provides a most helpful guide.
[620] Augustine, *Conf.* XIII.15.16, citing Psalm 104.2.
[621] Augustine, *Conf.* XIII.24.37.

emerge from Augustine's readings of Genesis, before suggesting some ways in which an account more sensitive to these dimensions would radically re-configure the practice of phenomenology itself.

Phenomenology points us to images, but Genesis asserts more radically that those images are in their teleological reality able to mediate between the immanent and the transcendent

First, the doctrine of *imago*. The Hebrew and Christian tradition of holding the *tzelem elohim* as a central anthropological, spiritual or mystical theme has been well-studied, and the specifically teleological dimension implied by the Latin translation *ad imaginem dei* is a pivotal moment of Marion's reading of Augustine.[622] Marion's disciple Olivier Boulnois has written an "archaeology of the visual in the Middle Ages"[623] which broadens the context of the discussion of what *imagines* are and can be, and considers this question in both historical and ontological context. What he means by the term "archaeology" is not a simple history of artistic images, nor even an historical study of philosophical and theological theories of images, but a genealogical account of the fragile relationship between images and reality which emerges out of medieval debates on the subject. For Boulnois, to ask about the history of the imagination is thus to ask about the history of the *truth*, and of our access to it: because especially in the Christian tradition, which has tended to be suspicious of any claims to direct and immediate

[622] Jean-Luc Marion, *Au Lieu De Soi,* 419.
[623] Olivier Boulnois, *Au-delà de l'image: Une archéologie du visuel au Moyen Âge* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2008).

revelation, people can only attain truth by means of some kind of mediation, whether verbal or imaginal. But words and images by definition, and by virtue of their finitude, have some degree of difference from the truth, they can by definition lead us into falsehood.[624] This logical tension runs, as though a fault line, throughout Boulnois' genealogy, and it is paralleled by an historical tension along which he organizes the terms of this discussion, namely the tension between Augustine and Denys the Areopagite.

In Boulnois' account, the medieval tradition of the image, running through Aquinas, Scotus, Eckhart and all the way to the Council of Trent, is essentially organized by their commitments to a Dionysian insistence that God is essentially formless, lacking even an intelligible form, which means that every image is in the end a "vision of his unlikeness, a figuration of the unfigurable," such that our mode of imaginary access to God is by means of those images which are most obviously different or deformed from God (447), and on the other hand an Augustinian insistence that God, although invisible to the senses, is visible in an intelligible form, such that our mode of imaginary access to God is by "entering into the invisible soul … [in] an intellectual intuition, without images" (446). It is to be sure an interesting disjunct which Boulnois has here diagnosed. But instead of embarking on the narration of the debate which ensues, we can question the terms set out at the very beginning. I contend that Boulnois has given, in the opening chapter of *Au Dela de L'image*, a rich but not quite rich enough account of Augustine on the image. In what follows, I will present the main points of

[624] Boulnois, *Au-delà de l'image,* 11.

his argument, and then discuss *De genesi ad litteram*, the central Augustinian text (mostly absent from his account) which would have complicated and enriched his portrait of Augustine, and thus his account of the entire Middle Ages, and, more to the point, ought to complicate and enrich the phenomenological portrait of Augustine construed more generally.

The first source to which Boulnois turns to elaborate the Augustinian account of the image is the rather obscure *83 Questions*, in which Augustine defines image as distinct from likeness on the one hand and equality on the other. Against likeness, which is the simple property of two things sharing some qualities, without implying any causal relationship between them, and against equality, which is just a more rigorous form of likeness, the image, for Augustine, is essentially marked by a causal or generative relationship to that of which it is an image. The example he takes here (and in multiple other locations) is a natural image, that of my reflection in a pond, which depends on me in a generative fashion. And obviously this is even more true in another natural image, that of a child's relationship to her mother, as being her image. Augustine notes that the child is not only the image of her mother, due to her causal dependence on her and their sharing of qualities, but also, were it not for the intervention of time, their ontological relationship would be that of equality: in other words, only their common immersion at different points on a temporal spectrum keeps the child and her mother from participating in the relationship both of image and of equality -- the conceptual overlapping of these two terms, as Boulnois points

out,[625] is foreign to Plato, but present in, of course, Trinitarian theology. And drawing on the thought, present in both the Platonic and the Aristotelian traditions, that 'art imitates nature,' Augustine makes similar points about artistic images, although these obviously do not necessarily share in the relationship of likeness with their originator, except in the case of the self-portrait: so the relationship of artist to painting, for example, derives from and participates in the relationship of parent to child, which itself derives from and participates in the relationship of the first person of the Trinity to the second.

All well and good. But, as Boulnois acknowledges,[626] Augustine is less intrigued and less bothered by these points than he is by the concept of "mental" or "spiritual" images, those which are internal to me, depend on things outside of me, and are in fact the very mode by which I can perceive any thing at all. To make this point, he turns (rightly but too briefly) to the last book of *De genesi ad litteram*, arguing that here is found a theological adaptation of Porphyry, who himself fused the Platonic tradition of tripartite anthropology with the Stoic tradition of the *phantasma*, the dreamlike apprehension of intellectual realities (or of deceptive images thereof). From Porphyry, Augustine elaborates a tripartite description of perception, corresponding to his tripartite anthropology: the body senses in its way, physically, and the mind senses in its way, intellectually; but mediating between these two sensations, just as the *spiritus* mediates between body and

[625] Boulnois, *Au-delà de l'image,* 18.
[626] Boulnois, *Au-delà de l'image,* 24.

mind, there is imagination, the active and productive sensation of images. This is of course comparable to Augustine's account of *memoria* in *Confessions* X, and Boulnois does in fact nod his head in that direction,[627] although without any sustained discussion of how *memoria* relates to imagination. (It is possible to argue that they are synonymous, and that, since the reception and production of images is more central to what Augustine is describing in *Confessions* X than is the memory of the past, 'imagination' would be a more faithful and less misleading translation than 'memory' for this elliptical but central term).

In addition to the relationship of natural images to their originals, the relationship of artistic images to their originals, the relationship of mental images to their originals and the divine relationship of Christ as Image to God the Father, Boulnois embarks onto one last part of the Augustinian terrain, the discussion of the doctrine according to which people are created 'to the image and likeness of God.'[628] And it is at this point -- without question the central point for any discussion of the Augustinian image -- that his account opens itself up to the most severe criticisms, from a philological or philosophical perspective. He specifies four points at which Augustine allegedly departs from earlier Greek or Latin patristic thought on the image of God: One, that Augustine conceives of humanity as made to the image of the entire trinity, instead of uniquely to Christ. This is undeniable. Two, that although the current of patristic thought is to make much of the preposition

[627] Boulnois, *Au-delà de l'image,* 30.
[628] Boulnois, *Au-delà de l'image,* 31-2.

'*ad*' in the formulation *ad imaginem dei*, as implying some distance between the present state of humanity and the full humanity present in Christ or in Paradise, Augustine denies the distinction between *being* the image of God and *being to* the image of God. This is, for reasons I will elaborate in a moment, problematic (and, as noted above, he does not have Marion on his side here). Three, that Augustine does not, following this same patristic current, distinguish between *imago*, 'image' (as that which humanity is by nature) and *similitudo*, 'likeness' (as that towards which humanity can strive, by imitating God in virtuous acts or in knowledge). And four, that the image of God resides for Augustine exclusively in the human soul, as distinct from the combination of the soul and the body. This last is perhaps the most immediately objectionable, and lays at the root of the earlier claim, the denial of the force of '*ad*' in the formulation *ad imaginem dei*. In support of this denial to ascribe the imaginality of God to the body, which Boulnois appears to be primarily invested in in order to ward off a crude anthropomorphism in our conception of God, he refers -- without explanation -- to *De genesi ad litteram* VI.12.21, which actually makes no mention of any problematic of the soul and the body.[629] The portion which Boulnois apparently means to support this claim reads as follows: "The pre-eminence of man consists in this, that God made him to His own image by giving him an intellect by which he surpasses the beasts, as I have explained above." The passage to which Augustine is here referring is III.20.30, in which he cites St Paul's gloss

[629] Boulnois, *Au-delà de l'image,* 36.

on the image of God[630] according to which the image of God is a process of "renewal" which takes place not simply in the mind, but specifically *spiritu mentis,* in the spirit of the mind. While of course the Pauline gloss stops short of ascribing this image to the body of humanity, and so Boulnois is partially right, Augustine's treatment of Paul here and elsewhere in *De genesi ad litteram* invites further reflection of the relationship of the spirit, which as Boulnois has argued above has as its primary function the imagination, to the mind on the one hand and the body on the other. By taking a look at the role of the imagination, and more precisely the Pauline imagination, in *De genesi ad litteram* XII, we will be in a place to call into question the choice Boulnois makes to refuse an Augustinian thought of the "*ad*" in *ad imaginem dei*.

Recall quickly one of Marion's more philological moments, wherein he describes the complex relationship of *tentiones* in Confessions X -- *intentio, attentio, distentio*. These form the pegs from which Augustine's account of temporality and indeed of human existence within this temporality hangs. Marion is hardly the first to notice this nexus of concepts; the relationship between these modalities of time and perception have been well studied within the discipline of Augustinian studies. Entirely absent from all of these discussions, however, is the parallel usage of a different *tentio* in *De genesi ad litteram*, which, after eleven books of discussion of Genesis, turns to an analysis of 2 Corinthians 12.2-4, in which Paul discusses his vision of the third heaven. This analysis follows logically from the end of Book XI, in

[630] The text is a conflation of Eph 4.23-4 'Be renewed in the spirit of your mind and put on the new man…' and Col. 3.10 '…the new man who is being renewed unto the knowledge of God, according to the image of his creator.'

which Adam and Eve are expelled from Paradise, because Augustine takes Paul's vision as literally the return to paradise, and the restoration (even if only in a mystic instant) of the full range of Adam's perceptive powers. He describes this vision as an '*ostentio*,' literally a stretching of the eye, and not without reason: Paul's account is rigorously apophatic about whether this vision is corporeal or spiritual, whether or not, in other words, it makes use of the bodily eye.[631] And this apophasis is the grounds on which we can return to paradise -- or at least we can return a consideration of paradise which is lacking in Boulnois' account to the question of the history of the image. Because after Augustine acknowledges that he is not certain, his discussion proceeds on the assumption that Paul's soul did not leave his body during his *ostentio*. This is in accordance with his earlier assertion[632] that the only *anima* is the *anima animans*; the soul understood not as noun but as participle, both 'sensing' other things and aware of its own life as exercising memory, intellect and will. The self-consciousness here described, in the three coequal registers of will, intellect and memory, is precisely the activity of the spirit perceiving life by the body. In other words, the rational sensing and interpretation of both intellectual and corporeal things is dependent on the only action in me that is unmediated, namely, 'that I exist, and that I know this fact, and that I love it': the images of all things are mediated to me

631 "Whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows." Augustine comments: "…it is not even clear what the third heaven is: namely, whether it is to be numbered among corporeal or spiritual things" (Augustine, *De genesi ad litteram* 12.1.2).
632 Augustine, *De genesi ad litteram* 7.8.11.

only through an originary image of the trinity;[633] contrary to Marion, the return to the Tree of Life must necessarily pass back through the Tree of Knowledge.

Augustine is more aware than the phenomenological tradition that the imagination can have a philosophical, a theological, and in the end even an ontological function

Imagination can mean many things to the modern ear: idle "fantasy" in the crude sense, or idealized romantic creativity, or the simple positing of a slight contra-factual twist on empirical reality which allows one to describe that reality more fully as it actually exists. For Augustine, imagination has at least two meanings: the first is primarily phenomenological, describing the process by which humanity receives phenomena as images, and the second is ontological, describing the process by which humanity itself is disclosed as imaginary.

Imagination-as-perception is the faculty by which humanity may sense transcendent Paradise in time; Augustine's description of this faculty is found in his discussion of the exemplary case of such sensation, Paul's vision of the third heaven.[634] This vision is the suspension of corporeal perception which is paralleled in everyday experience by the dreams we experience in sleep, or, in a stronger sense, when one dies. It differs from (Plotinian) intellectual vision in the difference between image and reality, and as such

633 Cf. Augustine, *De civitate dei* 11.26, 28.
634 2 Cor. 12, discussed in Augustine, *De genesi ad litteram* 12.

introduces a semiotic element to the ostensible visuality of perception and faith: faith gives a concept, imagination produces an image of that concept, and reason 'reads' that image.[635] Central to this perceptive process is both the limit and the reality of the image: there is no image by which one can identify, or in which one can exhaustively contain, an intellectual thing - examples include virtues, love, God - whereas I can embrace an image of a thing, e.g. my neighbor, or myself, and although my imaginative capacity still does not exhaust the thing's plenitude, I have still intended a true analogy of its being (and in so doing I have intended God, at a double remove – the image-created-in-my-mind of the image-as-created-by-God of God).

In both cases the reality exceeds the image; in the first case by logical necessity and in the second case only accidentally, to the extent that my imaginative capacity is as yet insufficiently trained. This mediated, indirect perception of God is the perception which remains for a world in time, and Augustine privileges this indirect or imaginative imagining of God to any pretended immediate relation to truth: since the world as we see it in time is the image of the intellectual realm, imagination is the proper mode of existential being within the world which, in its reception and its production of images, strives towards intellection.[636] Eschatologically, Augustine

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635 Augustine, *De genesi ad litteram* 12.6.15.

636 In fact one of Augustine's rare explicit affirmations of a sort of deification insists that deification occurs not on the register of nature, but on that of appearance (*Sermo* 9). There he notes that 'your image is in your son in one way, and in your mirror in a very different way': but paradoxically, the translation of humanity towards the image of God occurs by that which *appears* more like me (my image in the mirror), and not that which *is by nature* more like me (my son).

believes,[637] the imagination will be able to see, embrace and praise all things fully (as do the angels) by beholding the likeness of all things in the Image that is the divine creative Word (i.e. intending God at only one remove, if it is not impious to posit a gap between God and Word).

This dimension of imaginative perception mimetically participates in divine creation; as Augustine notes, there is no temporal gap between corporeal perception and imaginative perception, rather the object and my image of the object occur to me simultaneously, and only the temporality of language forces me to describe them sequentially.[638] This is an obvious parallel to his insistence[639] that God creates matter and form simultaneously, the temporality of Scripture's language being likewise bound to describe them in sequential words. This very fact, present in the quotidian perception of any thing, strikes him as more interesting, more mysterious and more praiseworthy than the extraordinary visions and dreams which, he says, hold the interest of his contemporaries.[640] By extension of this observation, Augustine argues for a participatory operation of *memoria* in divine creation: *memoria* not simply as memory of the past, but precisely as the imaginative faculty *par excellence*, produces images 'in shadows and silence' [*in tenebris atque silentio*],[641] a clear echo of Genesis 1.2. Every instance of imaginative reasoning -- that is, a rational perception of an object, a phenomenon, or a situation as an image, of God, which respects both the reality and the

637 Augustine, *De civ. dei* 22.28.
638 Augustine, *De genesi ad litteram* 12.11.22.
639 Augustine, *De genesi ad litteram* 1.15.29 and elsewhere.
640 Augustine, *De genesi ad litteram* 12.18.39.
641 Augustine, *Conf.* X.8.13.

limitation of that image -- is a promise of the coming ability of the imagination to see, embrace, and praise all things fully, as the angels do, by beholding the likeness of all things in the Image that is the divine Word. Or, in other words, as he puts it forcefully and in biblical terms[642] in his extensive meditation on the perceptive potentials of the resurrected body in the last book of *De civitate dei*, in the return to paradise, our eye -- and here Augustine is very insistent that it is specifically a matter of a *bodily* eye -- will be so cleansed as to see God as "all in all," the divine totality present in the imaginative perception of each discrete thing and of the harmonious totality of all things together.[643]

But what has this to do with the 20th century phenomenological tradition? This very peculiar sort of phenomenological reflection is born out of a biblical ontology, something we could term an imaginary realism, where there is in a sense *nothing* but images, but these images are not necessarily illusory, nor incorporeal: they are the necessary way through which humanity approaches *ad imaginem dei*. This privileging of appearance redoubles, in effect, the account of images as sensual, as born out in, for example, the reciprocity of Augustinian optics, wherein images, and light, travel out from the eye, as well as in to it.[644] It emerges that not vision in the modern sense, but reciprocity and exchange are at the heart of the Augustinian reflection on images, such that it would be fruitful to translate much of Augustine's

642 Cf. 1 Cor. 15.28.
643 Augustine, *De civitate dei* 22.30.
644 See e.g. *De trinitate* 9.3.3, and Margaret Miles' helpful summary, in *Augustine on the Body* (Missoula, MT: Scholars, 1979).

emphasis on sight[645] to the only sense that in modernity has kept this sense of exchange, that of touch (I cannot touch a table unless it is also touching me). Only by thinking of the sense, or better the *sensitivity,* of touch can we understand the imagination as Augustine does -- as tactile, the tactility of the eye, and of the soul, here understood as not only always and fully present into the body[646] (and emphatically *not* just "descended" into the mind), but also always and fully extended out to worldly things.

In light of this reciprocity, it is possible to suggest that, beyond Boulnois' comparison of the imagination to the Platonic (but really more Stoic) *phantasmata*, a more fruitful conversation might happen on the grounds of the more centrally Platonic, and more centrally Biblical, insistence on illumination as that which gives temporal reality both its birth and its fulfillment. For the present, all that remain are images, and the only way we can relate to them is through the imagination, however impure this imagination might at present be. But as for the future, in the at once eschatological and teleological paradise towards which we tend, and for which all was created, the dimension of *becoming* is thus not a realm of shadow, which will be transcended in favor of a purely intellectual grasp of God as an image-less form, but it is a realm of ever-fuller images, always tending back towards that which was created first: imagination, as the return to paradise, takes place at every instant of time, even the moment which originates time, that of the creation of light. We could note here, too, against

645 Augustine, *De trinitate* 11.1.1-2.

646 Indeed Augustine explicitly argues that hearing and in fact 'all motion in our body' occurs by means of the image (*De genesi ad litteram,* 12.16.33).

a too easily adopted Platonizing apophatic rejection of images, that Augustine maintains that images and the imagination will be present in the resurrection, just as firmly as he insists that the body will be resurrected.[647] And here emerges the true and radical break that Augustine makes on the ontological level with Platonism: the relevant distinction is not one of the (stable, intelligible) realm of being and the (unstable, imaginary or corporeal) realm of becoming, or (to put it into the terms of contemporary phenomenology) between the actual and the possible, but much more simply between present and future: being, if such a thing exists, is what is unstable and incomplete, and completely accessible for all of us, whereas any epistemological, phenomenological or ontological stability, is "present" only in the future, and so falls within the realm of speculation, mystery and faith. *Pace* Heidegger, the ontological question (and in the end the root of any question worth asking) is not "why *is* there something rather than nothing?", but "*quid erimus, et qualis erimus*" -- what shall our mode of being be, and how shall we exist?[648]

Augustinian metaphysics has a Trinitarian structure; the relationship between self and world is for Augustine one of creation and participation in the divine life

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[647] Augustine, *De genesi ad litteram* 12.36.69 -- just as the 'spiritual body' is only the body of flesh in its uncorrupted fullness (cf. e.g. *De civitate dei* 22.21), a resurrected perception will be different from our current perception not in its restriction to the intellectual realm or the corresponding faculty of the intellect, but only in its perfected ability to distinguish between bodies, images and intellectual realities, and to perceive each with the appropriate mode of vision.
[648] *De civitate dei* 22.24.

So Augustine goes beyond Heidegger on this point: it is not just that being only reveals itself to humanity, but that there is a reciprocal move from humanity into being: becoming in time is always becoming towards timelessness. This is why Augustine frequently says that we are still living in the 6th day of Genesis 1: humanity undergoes time to be made *towards* the image of God. This has a decidedly contemplative side to it, which explains why Augustine's two greatest contemplations (the vision at Ostia, and the last book of *De civitate dei*) are not strictly theological: that is, Augustine does not contemplate God, he contemplates the resurrected life of humanity. This teleological aspect of the imagination reflects perfectly the more mundane phenomenological sense in which imagination really refers to the unification of all of the senses, and the way humanity interprets sensory input into sensible intellectuality – when I remember or imagine the smell of a thing, or how it feels, or its sound, I am also able to remember or imagine all of its sensory dimensions. This multi-sensory nature gives an additional shade of meaning to the complexity of Augustinian optics, particularly when we remember the priority (and subsequent centrality) of light in the Genesis narrative of creation. Though at times Augustine's reading of *fiat lux* has the flavor of Plotinian emanation, more primarily this *lux* appears as the precondition of images, and thus of created being itself. Augustine's exegesis of the creation of light in *De civitate dei* thus serves as a synecdoche for his entire ontological system:

> If, therefore, we ask who made it, the answer is "God". If we ask by what means He made it, the answer is that He said

> "Let it be", and it was. And if we ask why He made it, the answer is because [*quia*][649] "it was good."[650]

Here we find a stunning revision of Aristotelian physics:[651] in fidelity to the doctrine of creation *ex nihilo*, Augustine omits the material cause, and then finds in the remaining three Aristotelian causes (respectively efficient, formal and final) the Trinity (Father, Son, Holy Spirit). A parallel development makes all the more clear this link between light and all that is illumined:

> Every particular thing, or substance, or essence, or nature, or whatever else you like to call it, has simultaneously about it these three aspects: that it is one something, and that it is distinguished by its own proper look or species from other things, and that it does not overstep the order of things.[652]

He thus gives the material for a Trinitarian ontology – from scriptural account of creation (indeed, from the first three verses of Genesis) it is seen that all things, and paradigmatically light, qua created, have within themselves a *vestigium trinitatis*. So it is true to say that all matter, because *ex nihilo*, is nothing, and yet by denying any autonomous material cause to creation, the Trinitarian construal of the other three causes somehow, beyond our present understanding, imbues matter (as we saw was the case with Scripture) with

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649 *'Quia'* is ambiguous, as Dyson's translation somewhat attests by translating it here as 'because' it was good, and on the next pages as 'so that' it might be good (with no grammatical difference to support either reading). This ambiguity is thoroughly congruent with Augustine's development of the 'spirit' involving a sense of time, motion, and *teleiosis*: as the final cause, it both is good and needs to become good. See also *De genesi ad litteram* 3.12.18, 12.14.30.

650 Augustine, *De civ. dei* 11.21.

651 It is all the more stunning that, to my knowledge, no treatment of Augustine in the context of ancient philosophy has discussed it as such: Gilson alone mentions it (190), but only finds here evidence for the relatively banal statement that, for Augustine, creation is good.

652 Augustine, *De vera religione* 7.13.

divine meaning,[653] a meaning which self-multiplies through time from pregnant *arche* to eschatological *telos*.[654] The neo-platonic *reditus* is in Trinitarian fashion radicalized, since the play of Trinitarian light across created shadowy trinities show them to be emanating perpetually forth from themselves, but always beyond themselves, into the full brilliance of the Trinity. It is for this reason that Augustine has to rein in his tongue lest he falsely ascribe conscious knowledge of the Trinity to Plato, whose threefold division of philosophy into natural, logical and ethical Augustine finds to have a deeply Trinitarian resonance.[655] Thus Augustine's finding the Trinity (and the Church) in Genesis is not an hermeneutical anachronism, but is rather central to his thought on Trinity, on creation, and on our sacramental participation therein.[656] Likewise, created light is one of Augustine's first attempts at an image of the essential unity,[657] because 'the splendor of light' simply is that light, with no separation in essence. Finally, in addition to its intrinsic reconciliation of unity and diversity, and its prominence in the biblical narrative of creation, light is also (and here is an area where Marion's

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653 This paradox (of all things, at all times, both being and not-being), is well described with reference to Augustine's earliest work by Emilie Zum Brunn, in *St Augustine: Being and Nothingness*, the only book-length treatment of Augustine's ontology thus far.

654 Augustine, *De trinitate* 3.16 uses explicitly the metaphor of pregnancy: 'For the world itself, like mothers heavy with young, is heavy with the causes of things that are coming to birth.'

655 Augustine, *De civ. dei* 8.5, 11.25.

656Cf. Augustine, *De genesi ad litteram* 4.3.7-8, with 'measure, number and weight' (Wisdom 11.20) also construed as a *vestigium trinitatis*. In this sense *Conf.* 13.9.10 ('my weight is my love') is profoundly spiritual in the precise sense in which Augustine develops the spiritual in *De genesi ad litteram*.

657 Augustine, *De trinitate* 4.27.

account might have on its own terms benefitted from a consideration of light and the imagination) light is favored by Augustine as a metaphor for divine love: it is self-giving, and yet never exhausts itself or even depletes its own resources in its self-donation.

The aforementioned modified Aristotelian account of causes (who, how, why) underlies and gives birth to Augustine's many accounts of created beings as vestigially Trinitarian: we could mention here, among others, the parallel trinity of wisdom's *ordo* of all things in 'measure, number and weight,'[658] and the derivative anthropological trinities of memory, understanding and will, and lover, beloved and love. Of these, the first is of primary importance to Augustine; the order of wisdom is a favorite passage of Augustine's, treated in texts from *De genesi ad litteram*[659] to *De civitate dei*[660] is already implicitly in the famous passage of the *Confessions*: 'my weight is my love'[661] is profoundly spiritual in the precise sense of the Spirit as 'final cause,' the goodness of all things. Number, as the Christology of all things, deserves a longer treatment than I can provide here; the *numeri* for Augustine are deep with the musical resonances of the Pythagoreans, and implicit within his

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[658] Hill's note on 'in measure, number and weight' is helpful: '[Augustine]…press[es] the preposition "in" to its limits. If God arranged all things in these three, these three must have existed before all things; which is only possible if they are God. And so he interprets them as a Trinitarian formulation; God (Father) is measure without measure, as that which prescribes *modus* or limits to everything; God (Son) is number without number, as that which provides everything with its *species* or look or beauty or proper nature; God (Holy Spirit) is weight without weight as that which draws everything to its own proper rest and stability' (321).

[659] Augustine, *De genesi ad litteram* 4.3.7-8.

[660] Augustine, *De civ. dei* 11.30.

[661] Augustine, *Conf.* XIII.9.10.

account is a vastly under-explored account of what we may term 'ontology in the adverbial,' wherein things *are* more or less, e.g. angels *are* more, i.e. are more *intensely*, than humans, or the soul 'is more' than the body. The significance of *magus* and *minus esse* for the early Augustine is outlined by Emilie Zum Brunn;[662] she and I share the opinion that this formulation is fairly constant throughout Augustine's career, and this adverbial ontology is crucial to understanding Augustine's conception of hierarchy. Augustine replaces the 'chain of being' with something more like a symphony, with different ontological intensities vibrating on different wavelengths without, for that, being quite 'superior' or 'inferior'. But to understand the 'number' of things in this way would be to have angelic knowledge; the starting point for us must instead be imagination – i.e. understanding the goodness of things, their spiritual final cause.

But to understand this perception of goodness (which is itself a moment of praise, that is, of theurgic return to God) as properly imaginative, as I wish to do, we must look briefly at a key moment in the development of Augustine's celebrated, and just as often misunderstood, account of the anthropological trinity: most famously, this appears in *De trinitate,* but it too appears as early as the *Confessions*. Notably, in the earlier account he posits *esse* and not *memoria* as the quasi-Father-figure. Latent here, if one believes a continuity to Augustine's thought, is an equivalence between memory and being, which is only a different way of saying (as Augustine frequently iterates) that I am insofar as God knows me: ontic being *is* divine

[662] Zum Brunn, *Being and Nothingness* 112ff.

anamnesis. Augustine makes this point most clearly in a discussion of *memoria* and wisdom,[663] in which Augustine revisits the argument that wisdom, the immutable Trinitarian form, 'spreads itself through all things in marvelous patterns of created movement', in the 'conversion of bodies [*conversione … corporum*]' to itself.[664] This conversion of the body, while described most vividly in the *Confessions* regarding Augustine the individual, is only applicable to the individual body as a microcosm; the *exitus* and *reditus* of the prodigal son is merely a participation in the return to God of prodigal being. Further, this return is for Augustine the very definition of time, as the 'unfolding' [*explicando*][665] of created measures, numbers and weights. That all of the foregoing is so robustly Trinitarian for Augustine puts the lie to the phenomenological false problematic of subjectivity and objectivity; subjects and objects have no austere lines drawn between them, and are instead constitutively linked by their fundamental *vestigia trinitatis*. This commensurability between the self and the world, to which the phenomenological tradition has aspired in some form as a constant all the way back to Husserl, is for Augustine simply a matter of reading Genesis carefully.

Augustine finds an intriguing linguistic connection in this regard in the text of Genesis: for the creation of each individual component, Genesis employs a formulaic trinity of a jussive subjunctive (*fiat lux*, for example), a passively-voiced appearance (*et facta est lux*), and a benediction (*et vidit Deus*

663 Augustine, *De trinitate* 11.17-18.
664 Augustine, *De trinitate* 3.7, 3.9.
665 Augustine, *De civitate dei* 22.24, *De trinitate* 3.16

lucem quod esset bonum). The only exceptions to this formulaic pattern are the creation of heaven and earth in their entirety, and the creation of humanity, both of which exist in the perfect active indicative (*In principio creavit Deus caelum et terram; et creavit Deus hominem ad imaginem suam*). Created things exist, insofar as they exist, hung from the poles of subjunctive potentiality, passive becoming, and divine blessing, and only in the eyes of totality and humanity can they reach full flower as actuality. Augustine's own commentary very much emphasizes the fact that directly after this *ad imaginem suam* comes the directive of dominion,[666] which might seem to underscore a hierarchical difference between the human soul and the soul of the cosmos. But this rests on a fundamental temporal misunderstanding; God's direct (indicative) and indirect (subjunctive) creative activity is not, as Augustine is at constant pains to emphasize, temporally conditioned, but the corresponding human participation in the divine creative act is temporally conditioned, and thus both the gifted existence of heaven and earth and the co-constitutive subjective act of receiving them are equally subject to the limitations of time. The existence of the self, then, is the primary theophany; its reflection in self-knowledge and its refraction by means of the knowledge of self given by other subjects and by created objects, as Marion and especially Chrétien have developed them, forms both the mirror and the lens which mediate all knowledge and all perception.

[666] Augustine, *De genesi ad litteram* 3.20.30.

Since the imagination is central to the Augustinian self, the education and purification of the speculative capacity is the primary role of the sacraments

Mirror and lens: both apt translations of *speculum*, the key word in 1 Corinthians 13.12, which, judging by brute number of citations at least, is Augustine's favorite biblical verse. The speculative dimension of Augustine's thought is, then, thoroughly necessary for his phenomenology. Implicit in this verse is the progression, or the education,[667] of the soul to see God '*in substantiam*.' Augustine, as usual, begins this training from the ground up:

> We observe [God in his substance] as both not being far away from us and yet being above us, not spacially but in its august and marvelous eminence, and in such a way that it also seemed to be with or in us *by the presence of its light*.[668]

The ontological weight of *lux* to which this passage attests invites a re-appraisal of the closely related Augustinian theme of *illuminatio*; if light is being, then illumination is not simply epistemological, but existential. It is thus not just a matter of saying that faith and reason are compatible, or that faith is intensified reason (although these are, of course, true): the divine illumination of the cosmos summons forth a response from the entirety of the rational soul, mind, and body. This sort of a liturgical or ritual imagination, mediating between faith and reason, is the present-tense recognition of the *imago dei* in all creation, and also the productive cultivation

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667 '*Exercere*' (Augustine, *De trinitate* 15.1).

668 Augustine, *De trinitate* 15.10, emphasis mine.

of that same *imago* in the self (which is the limit of the usefulness of the term 'deification' for Augustine). Indeed, the historical gap between seeing God as he 'appears' in the historical Christ and seeing God *in substantiam* forms the ground for Augustine's development of the existential and epistemological category of imagination. The immediate apparition of God is already lost to the post-ascension church, but the mediated, indirect perception of God - as the creative source of the world, in the iconic goodness of all things, and perhaps most exemplarily in the sacraments - remains available in time, and Augustine privileges this indirect or imaginative perception, which can only attest *in aenigmate* to any pretended immediate mystic intellectual revelation: since the world as we see it in time is the image of the intellectual realm, imagination is the proper mode of being within it which, in its imagining, strives towards intellection.

Here it is possible to discern a dimension in Augustine's reinterpretation of Platonic *anamnesis* that is theurgical in both the objective and the subjective sense: *memoria* is the work of God, and the liturgical response, particularly in the Eucharist, is the participation of *memoria* in the divine order: Augustine cannot have missed the cooperative facet of the Eucharist implied by the Latin translation of *anamnesis* in 1 Cor. 11.24-5 as *com-memoratio* ('do this in an act of co-*memoria*-tion with me'). Here again we see the dim outlines of a sacramental dimension, at least eschatological but also to a limited extent in our own time, of imagination: in the Eucharistic body of Christ, the images of all things are signified (here we remember that

a major, if not the primary, meaning of *sacramentum* for Augustine is 'sign').[669] The development of the imaginative faculty to be able so to see these images and to read them, the heightening of the *sensus*, is at the same time transcendent, material, and reflexive.

Augustine's overlooked metaphysical doctrine of *rationes* both corrects and supplements his other proto-phenomenological texts

In all of this, it is important not to be misled by an overly narrow reading of the *imago dei* as a simple mental or intellectual correspondence between humanity and God. It is instructive that, though Aquinas, for example, tends to read the *imago dei* as *intellectus* or alternatively as *mens,*[670] Augustine's favored word is *ratio.* To underline a possible distinction between the two – the first as more susceptible to Bonaventuran or even Cartesian isolation from the world, and the second as more universal and material, I wish to lift up an admittedly peripheral Augustinian doctrine, that of the *causales rationes* or *seminales rationes*, the ontological doctrine which, in Augustine's own thought, extends his early discovery of God as *interior intimo meo*[671] into all the cosmos: God as more intimate to the world than it is to itself. Iamblichus, much more than Plotinus or indeed Plato himself, lays the groundwork for these *causales rationes* in his discussion of the cosmic spheres as principles (*archai*) which govern the forms of all particulars in the

[669] This is not, I concede, his primary meaning in *de gen. ad litt.* but a survey of Augustine's usage of *sacramentum* throughout his career tends this way.
[670] Cf. *Summa Theologica* 1.93.6. Aquinas is in fact deeply Augustinian on this issue; his linguistic preference does not fundamentally alter a deep ontological continuity.
[671] Augustine, *Conf.* III.6.5

cosmos.[672] To be sure, something very like this is implicit in Plato's forms, but to my knowledge Plato never explicitly claims these to be embodied in matter - whether, as in Iamblichus, in the cosmic spheres, or, as in Augustine, all the way into particular earthly manifestations.

As I shall argue below, the incarnational logic of the *causales rationes* allows the entire cosmos to participate in the divine creation of a new world, via the creation of images (which for Augustine's imaginative realism, in Augustine's linguistic universe, are ontologically superior to any brutely material existents). But this incarnational logic, insofar as it is rigorously Trinitarian, avoids both the monism and the pantheism into which Plotinus and Iamblichus respectively narrowly escape teetering. Augustine's rational theurgy (cf. Paul's *logike latreia,* Rom. 12.1) retains positive elements of both in a trinit-urgy - in which the moments of creation, incarnation and ecclesial ritual all mediate between transcendence and immanence, and so between faith and reason.

The *causales rationes* are not exhaustively understood if we take them only in their most immediate exposition as an explanation of maggots, as in *de genesi ad litteram* 3.14.23, nor (as Anaxagoras' *spermata* were) simply an explanation of how seemingly new natures could come into existence - these *causales* are meant ontologically, as a doctrine without which nothing could be. Augustine's rational causes are the 'archetypal harmonies of reason

[672] Iamblichus, *De mysteriis*, 184.4.

[*congruentia rationis*] which live immutably in the very wisdom of God,' and yet are the proper immanent being of that which they cause:

> …it is thanks to the activity of God continued even down to the present time that seeds display themselves and evolve from hidden and invisible folds, as it were, into the visible forms of beauty which we behold.[673]

In this doctrine, Augustine asserts transcendence at the very heart of immanence.[674] As such the *rationes* are, contrary to the pedestrian 20th-century readings of the *seminales* which try to extract from them a proto-Darwinian Augustine, or to refute such an extraction,[675] considerably more sophisticated and all-encompassing than the pagan *spermata*, which assumed some stability of things within themselves, so that the paradox to be explained was how 'new' natures could come out of existing natures. Augustine is working out of a different tradition; creation *ex nihilo* demands an explanation of the existence of all natures at every moment, since no stable 'existing natures' can be assumed within the flux of time. Things are constantly in excess of themselves, and thus 'other' (*aliud*) from themselves, because of the slipperiness of the present moment - any moment at which a thing could be identical with itself is, once named as such a moment, already

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673 Augustine, *De civ. dei* 22.24.

674 'All things that come to corporeal and visible birth have their hidden seeds lying dormant in the corporeal elements of this world' … 'thus it is the creator of all these invisible seeds who is the creator of all things, since whatever comes into our ken by a process of birth receives the beginnings of its course from hidden seeds, and derives its due growth and final distinction of shape and parts from what you could call the original programming [*originalibus regulis*] of those seeds' (Augustine, *De trinitate* 3.13, trans. Hill – who kindly apologizes for the extremely unfortunate translational anachronism in the last phrase).

675 Cf. Canon Dordolot, *Darwinism and Catholic Thought* (New York: Messenger, 1922) and Michael McKeough, OP, *The Meaning of the Rationes Seminales in St Augustine* (Washington, D.C: Catholic University of America Press, 1926).

gone. A thing is more than it was simply because what it was is now a memory, and what it is is already striving to become, in conversion to God, more (itself) than itself. (This is an ontological privileging of the present [*praesens*] over the past which, as we shall see, does not denigrate *memoria*, but raises it ecclesiologically; imaginative Eucharistic *memoria* becomes the vehicle of sight for God as *ubique praesens* [the 'everywhere present']).

Augustine memorably speaks of the angels as the 'farmers' of creation;[676] the angelic and the priestly role, to which humanity existentially aspires, is to tend being, watering the *seminales rationes*. And as they can perform miracles by their keen perception of God-in-Himself, God-in-matter (the *seminales rationes*), and God-as-reflected-in-themselves,[677] so too must our liturgical education pay close and simultaneous attention to all three (which, as we have seen, are all signified together in the Eucharistic *corpus mysticum*). In perhaps his most radical affirmation of the imaginative perception of matter, Augustine argues in language quite familiar to the Iamblichean ear: 'To see [God's] substance [in its uncreated immateriality], hearts have to be purified [*corda mundantur*] by all these things which are seen by eyes and heard by ears.'[678] *Corda mundantur*: this bizarre formulation is heavy with significance; a more etymologically daring translation would dictate that hearts must be *worlded* by the imaginative perception of matter if they would

676 Augustine, *De genesi ad litteram* 9.15.26, *De civ. dei* 12.25.
677 Augustine, *De trinitate* 3.21.
678 Augustine, *De trinitate* 3.4.

see God *in substantiam suam*. In other words, if one has truly received matter, one has truly perceived God.[679]

But one can, with Augustine, go further than this: *si bene accepistis, vos estis quod accepistis* ['If you receive it well, you are yourselves what you receive'].[680] The fact that he makes this claim in a Eucharistic context (the object of reception and becoming being the body of Christ) is not a compromise of the claim; on the contrary, it is a radicalization: if one has truly received matter, one has *become* both matter and God. *Homoiosis kosmoi* and *homoiosis theoi* are thus not simply, as they are for Iamblichus, parallel and concurrent movements; they are, for Augustine, identical.[681]

Augustine's creational physics, while allowing for a more conventionally scriptural diachronic eschatological teleology, insists that this teleology must be developed out of the creational synchronic teleology, in which things are created in full (germinally and potentially), have at every moment in time their formal fullness in eternity *in verbo*, yet still are at each moment striving in praise to divest themselves of what finitude they

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679 A sensitive soul will find joy and beauty in the corporeality of 'mere existence' (Augustine, *De civitate dei* XI.27), but 'if a good soul finds joy in the good that is in every creature, what is more excellent than that joy which is found [intellectually] in the Word of God through whom all things have been made?' (Augustine, *De genesi ad litteram* 12.34.67).

680 Augustine, *Sermo* 227.

681 This too is how he understands the 'very good' benediction of Genesis 1.31, which is in some sense parallel to Plotinus' privileging of the beauty of the whole over the beauty over any given part (*Ennead* 1.6) – as a blessing not specific to humanity, but precisely to all creation, and humanity insofar as we are correctly placed in Paradise, tending it without ruling over it. Thus the paradigmatic 'man' is man-as-priest (*Conf.* 13.22.32), humanity striving *ad imaginem et similitudinem nostrum*, the image which Augustine sees here as primarily 'generating sons by the gospel' by means of sacramental perceiving and judging the 'sons' that are from eternity seminally present in all humanity and indeed in all created matter (13.23.34).

possess. This is somewhat paradoxical - the final end ('there we shall rest and see, see and love, love and praise')[682] is a moment of self-possession, but only by the self-divestiture of praise. Unsurprisingly, this synchronic teleology is Trinitarian for Augustine, who develops what might be termed an 'ontology of missions' by defining the being of phenomena as the revelation in time of, and so the ever-passing shadows cast by, the eternal Trinitarian processions of light.[683] The manifestations of these missions in time (most dramatically at the Incarnation and Pentecost) appear seminally, as well; the Son and Spirit are both paradoxically 'sent where [they] already [were] … appearing to the eyes of men' where they had previously been 'hidden' [*secreti*].'[684]

The final cause - both diachronic and synchronic - of theurgical imaginative vision is the last piece of scripture cited in *De trinitate*: 'We say many things and do not attain, and the sum of our words is, he is all things [*universa est ipse*].'[685] No text better presents the paradoxes of the theurgical imagination, in which the robust ontological difference between creator and created is the very principle that unites them in an astonishing *est*: the very verb *esse,* rather than the simple vehicle of identity, changes from intransitive to transitive, from tautological to teleological. If the shortcomings of the phenomenological tradition have one unifying symbol, it would be this: a failure to recognize the rich elasticity of the verb *sum, esse, fui, futurum.*

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[682] Augustine, *De civ. dei* 22.30.
[683] Augustine, *De trinitate* 4.1ff.
[684] Augustine, *De trinitate* 3.3.
[685] Sirach 43.27.

It is no surprise then that, in the multifaceted Paradise which can signify a place, the third heaven, the moral joy of humanity, and the Church, corporeal and imaginative visions are not discarded but perfected.[686] The liability for error, the lack of clarity, which alone hinders our natural attempt to imaginatively perceive a thing and so immediately to imaginatively allow it to offer its praise to its Creator, is, in the teleological fullness of Paradise, of course eradicated; this, however, without destroying but in fact redeeming corporeal and imaginative vision, as well as fulfilling without satiating our ontological desire for God. In other words the famous promise that "There we shall rest and see, see and love, love and praise" shows the pregnancy of rest with (an altogether restless) praise; the promise is not the satiation of desire but the replacement of *distentio* with a pure *extentio*. Praise is, as Augustine says of the Alleluia, an endless novelty[687] of which Heidegger's angsty search for novelty in boredom is a cheap parody, and one for which rest is a simple precondition: if one likes, rest is the simplicity of being, an epoche which brackets out distractions, so that one can see, and love, for the first time.

At the close of *De civitate dei*, Augustine claims that 'We ourselves shall become that seventh day,'[688] i.e. the church at rest, the Sabbath that is a sign. Augustine's cosmos is profoundly musical; perhaps there is something of an octave in his eight day theology, wherein the Church, like a suspended 7th note, forever reaches for the resolution of the octave ('consecrated by the

686 Augustine, *De genesi ad litteram* 12.36.69.
687 Augustine, *Sermo* 362.
688 Augustine, *De civ. dei* 22.30.

resurrection of Christ, and prefiguring the eternal rest not only of the Spirit, but of the body also'). It might seem odd to read such a Gregorian *epektasis* into Augustinian rest, but after all 'what other end do we set for ourselves than to reach that kingdom of which there is no end'?

Conclusion: What good is phenomenology for Augustine? What good is Augustine for phenomenology?

It is only by an admittedly circuitous route that the phenomenological tradition has brought us to such considerations. The ritualized education of the soul towards a sensitivity to the thoroughly theological ontology which seems to underlie much of Augustine's thought on time and the self is under-conceptualized in even the best of this tradition, represented in this thesis primarily by Jean-Louis Chrétien. And though I have consistently tried to show ways in which the accounts of Marion and Chrétien in particular gesture towards this theological metaphysics, the burden of this work is in the end quite the opposite. In this final essay, the reader will have noticed that the trajectory of the argument tends less towards establishing the practice or ideology of phenomenology as necessary for the study of Augustine, and more towards establishing the reading of Augustine as a necessary corrective practice for phenomenology itself. To some extent, the recent phenomenological interaction with Augustine acknowledges at least implicitly that, since its beginnings, phenomenology has claimed the bishop of Hippo as an intellectual forefather. But the more it has let him speak on

his own terms, and the more it has respected the differences between him and the tradition's more immediate fathers (Heidegger, Husserl, Kant, and the great ghost of Descartes who hovers over much of their thought), the more he has forged a disciplinary role in the tradition's own practices and thought. The principle and most obviously germane elements of his thought – the self as a *quaestio*, the destabilizing force of temporality, and especially the role that beings can have in illuminating truth to the subject – rarely appear in Augustine divorced from the metaphysical, traditional, historical and theological scaffolding which support them in his own thought. This can, and should, make the phenomenologists uncomfortable, and to some extent it has.

I do not wish to deny that the close and careful and inventive readings of Marion and Chrétien has been worthwhile, from the perspective of Augustinian scholarship. At the very least, as my opening invocation of Isidore of Seville can remind us, the phenomenological guide to Augustine points to an interesting confluence of the tradition inaugurated by Husserl with theological thought, in a manner that Husserl himself would have been surprised to have seen. Their readings of Augustine shed an eclectic and vigorous light on some of Augustine's central texts, and their increasing openness to including more peripheral texts – the sermons and the biblical commentaries most of all, but also *De trinitate* – begin to insist on an underlying continuity between all of Augustine's work in various genres. The most profound contribution that their forays have made, in my eyes, is the

insistence that, in some sense, the relationship between the self and the world is a hermeneutical key that can unlock many of the doors in the Augustinian worldview. This insistence is not entirely novel to the phenomenologists, but they have held onto it with a rigor that surprises, and it is indeed hard to imagine such a rigor existing without the grumpy idiosyncrasies of a Heidegger or even a Derrida. I have argued in this final chapter that their experiment, the attempt to read as much of Augustine as is possible through this lens, in many ways succeeds, and that though they have not yet tried to include many central elements of Augustinian philosophy in this purview, it is not difficult to imagine the shape of the argument that they would make, if they were more ideologically open to considering them.

In closing, I would like to assert a hope: I hope that Marion and especially Chrétien continue to wrestle with Augustine for this reason. Indeed I expect that the themes I have suggested might fit into their work so far – Platonism, teleology, the imagination, ritual, biblical hermeneutics, the Trinity – would find a more fruitful exposition and exploration at their hands than they have at my rather amateurish attempts, especially given that they gesture at times to a sincere willingness to let Augustine reconfigure their own practice. If they are willing to continue to let Augustine challenge the boundaries between philosophy and theology, between metaphysics and Scripture, between thought and life, I suspect that they would have considerably more light to shed on Augustine. More to the point, I suspect that Augustine would have much more light to shed on them.

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